CAN CLINTON HANDLE SADDAM?—*THE EDITORS*

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# THE NEW REPUBLIC

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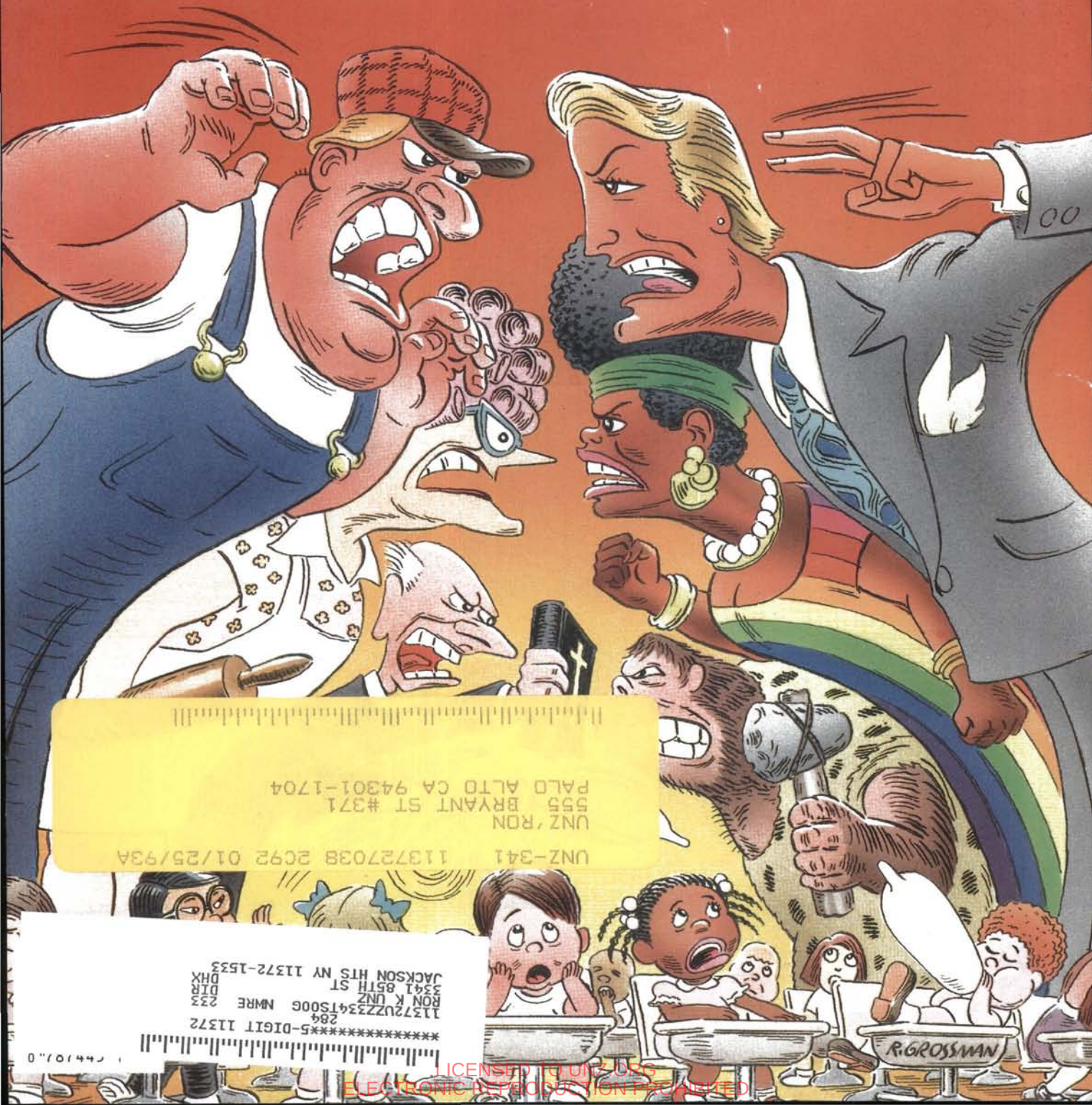


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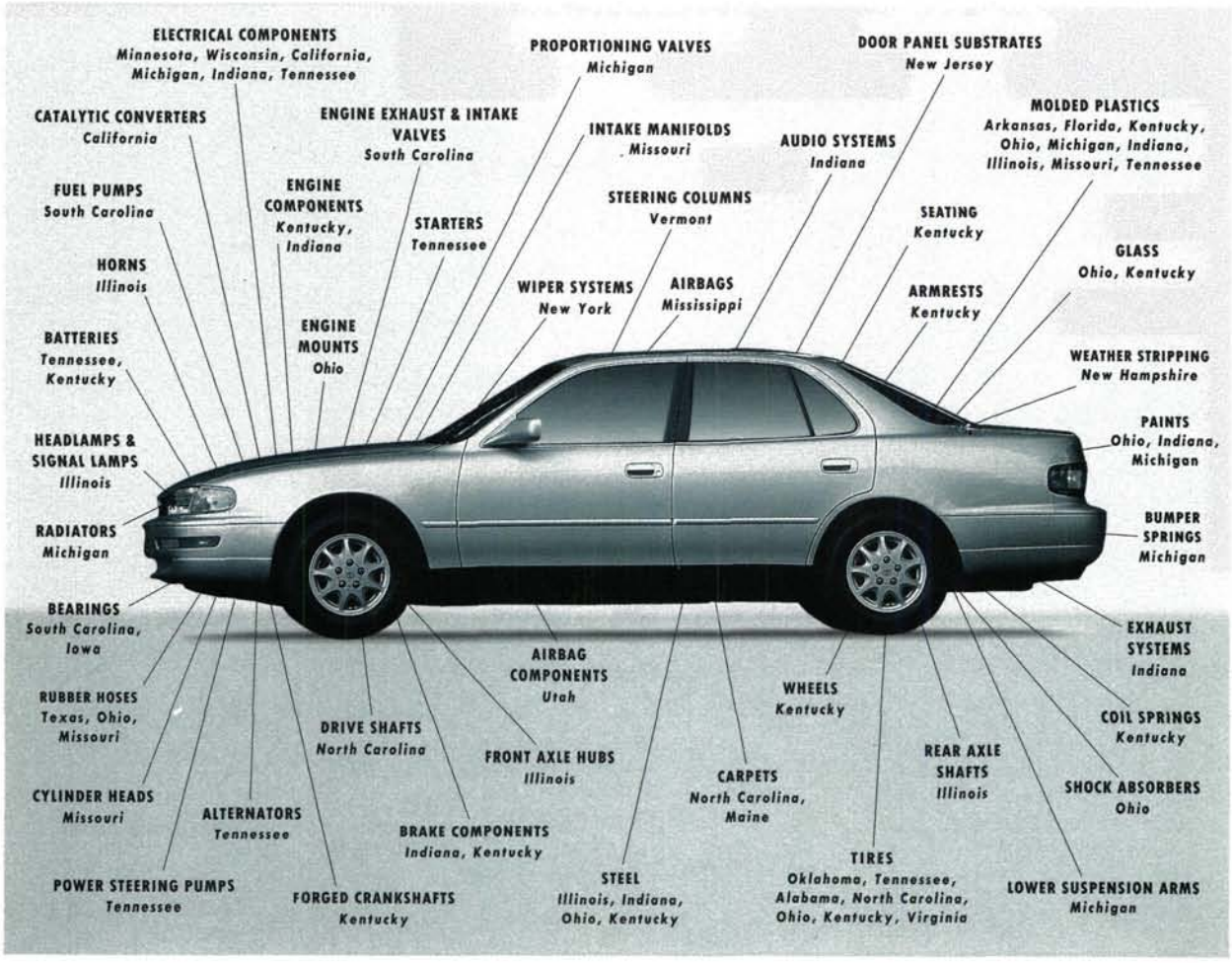


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# THE NEW REPUBLIC

*A Weekly Journal of Opinion*

**FEBRUARY 8, 1993**

**FOUNDED 1914**
**WASHINGTON, D.C.**
**ISSUE 4,073**



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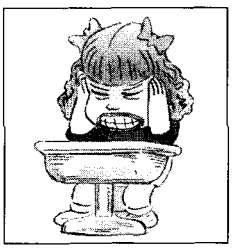

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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 208, Number 6, Issue 4,073, February 8, 1993. (Printed in the U.S. on January 20, 1993.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 4 & 11, July 26 & Aug. 2, Aug. 23 & 30, and Sept. 20 & 27, 1993) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. The New Republic/National Review joint advertising (212) 702-4882. Yearly subscriptions, $69.97; foreign, $99.97; Canada, $84.97. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling).


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(ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, CD-ROM, issue and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Internet mail address: TNR@aol.com. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 602, Mount Morris, IL 61054. For subscription problems call 800-827-1289.





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# CORRESPONDENCE

## Sign of the times

**To the editors:**

As you may know, President-elect Clinton has asked me to serve as Secretary of Labor. Given my responsibilities, and to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest, I will have to end my role as contributing editor of THE NEW REPUBLIC. I joined up over a decade ago, and have enjoyed the relationship immensely. I trust that our friendship will endure. Please convey my very best wishes to the rest of the gang.

ROBERT B. REICH
*Office of the President-Elect and Vice President-Elect*
*Little Rock, Arkansas*

## Cast down your bucket

**To the editors:**

In "Gatecrashers" (December 28) Michael Kinsley takes issue with my assertion that ex-slaves after the Civil War might have fared better without turn-of-the-century mass migration from Europe. He seems stunned even at the suggestion.

Kinsley's view tells us just how mythologized our modern-day immigration history has become. While the ill-effects of immigration might be a mystery to young writers like Kinsley, the connection was obvious to Frederick Douglass, who in 1863 said this about the New York City Draft Riots: "Every hour sees the black man elbowed out of employment by some newly arrived immigrant whose hunger and whose color are thought to give him a better title to the place."

Later, Booker T. Washington observed:

> To those of the white race who look to the incoming of those of foreign birth and strange tongue and habits for the prosperity of the South, were I permitted I would repeat what I say to my own race, "Cast down your bucket where you are." Cast it down among the eight millions of Negroes whose habits you know, whose fidelity and love you have tested in days when to have proved treacherous meant the ruin of your firesides. Cast down your bucket among these people who have, without strikes and labor wars, tilled your fields, cleared your forests, built your railroads and cities and brought forth treasures from the bowels of the earth, and helped make possible this magnificent representation of the progress of the South.

Kinsley also makes the gratuitous, nasty remark: "Whether this would actually have benefited blacks or not, it might have spared us Dan Stein." This remark basically says that no American can favor immigration regulations because we have ancestors who immigrated earlier. That's pretty silly. Must we all be anti-choice because each of us is the product of a full-term pregnancy?

DAN STEIN
*Executive Director*
*Federation for American Immigration Reform*
*Washington, D.C.*

**To the editors:**

There is much to contest in Michael Kinsley's "Gatecrashers," but overall he has performed a useful social function in helping to open the immigration policy topic for discussion. Back in 1979, when I helped organize the Federation for American Immigration Reform, we theorized that there would be three stages in the debate we were trying to start:

1. *The Statue of Liberty Phase.* In this phase, whenever the immigration topic came up, recitation of Emma Lazarus's poem was considered a sufficient answer.

2. *The Caveat Phase.* In this stage, thoughtful people begin to have some questions, but feel the need to excuse their interest by interjecting such phrases as "I'm not a racist or a xenophobe, but ..." Then they state the proposition for discussion. This seems to be the stage we're currently in.

3. *Free Discussion.* In this mature stage of the immigration debate, people will be able to discuss the issues as legitimate public policy topics, without first excusing themselves, or having their motives or morals challenged.

With Kinsley's piece, as well as recent articles in *The New York Times*, *National Review* and *The Atlantic*, we seem to be entering the mature phase of free discussion. We thank Kinsley for his part in giving us all permission to discuss the topic and its accompanying myths.

JOHN H. TANTON
*Founding Chairman*
*Federation for American Immigration Reform*
*Petoskey, Michigan*

## Remembering colonialism

**To the editors:**

Robert D. Kaplan asserts that the current political chaos afflicting so many African nations is traceable to a political culture somehow inherently "dysfunctional" ("Continental Drift," December 28). He attributes only superficial political wounds, if any, to the intervention of Western powers in African affairs. Kaplan forgets that it was the European colonial powers that set up the nation-states of Africa as they appear on the map today. Since the defining of national boundaries was undertaken by the colonizers without consideration for tribal alliances and rivalries, it is no wonder instability has been so rampant in Africa. If African nation-states had been allowed to develop more naturally, following tribal lines, interclan warfare, political corruption and resulting famine might be far less common.

CHRIS JOHNSON
*Haverford, Pennsylvania*

**To the editors:**

Robert D. Kaplan and TNR are to be congratulated for publishing an honest article about the roots of the appalling problems of black Africa. The American press tends to present these problems as if they were somehow inherent in the air or the soil of the continent, rather than a result of human behavior. In fact, in blaming the "political culture" of Africa, Kaplan still evades the basic fact that the utter failure of postcolonial Africa is a result of the attitudes and behavior of Africans. Anyone who has lived there, as I did for half my life, knows that the downward spiral results from the day-to-day behavior of the African people.

In many traditional African cultures, raiding the neighbors was a way of life, and tribal hatreds are still universal. While men had all the power, women did most of the work. And attitudes that may be compatible with preindustrial culture are often incompatible with modern industrial society. An agricultural culture based on wood and leather requires no concepts like preventive maintenance, precision work or attention to schedules. Without these, modern industrial society is impossible.

Kaplan's modest solution—increasing Western investment in the least dysfunctional countries—is a band-aid. The only solution that promises a real hope of progress for the suffering masses would be a return to benevolent British-style colonialism. If Africans were governed for a few generations by people who really gave a damn about education, rational development and population control, they would eventually be able to govern themselves. While such an approach may seem unacceptable to most in the West as well as in Africa, the current chaos is unlikely to yield to less drastic measures. We can either stand by and watch more Somalias, Sudans and Ugandas, or we can have the political and moral courage to step in and impose order.

LAURENCE FRANK
*Berkeley, California*



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## Motivated

**To the editors:**

Paul Offner ("Workfail," December 28) ends his article on the Family Support Act, which funds education, training and workfare programs, with a call for full funding: "Unfortunately, Congress provided only a small fraction of the necessary funds four years ago. It's time to correct that mistake." Pointing at insufficient spending as a key mistake is itself mistaken. As Offner also recognizes, the challenge is "to do something about ... those who are *not* motivated, who are at risk of long-term dependency."

A far superior answer is to reshape the incentive structure. It is universally agreed that because of the lack of progressivity in our tax code, low-wage work in the United States doesn't pay—recipients of public assistance are rarely much better off working. This can be greatly changed (*without* new taxpayer dollars) by making the tax system more progressive and lowering taxes on the working poor. (A worker making $7,500 currently pays ten times higher Social Security taxes percentage-wise than one making $750,000—go figure!) Eliminating payroll taxes on the first $15,000 would do more to coax people off welfare than free education and make-work jobs ever will.

Recipients of public assistance also lose Medicaid as soon as they start work. Eliminating the least cost-effective medical procedures for welfare recipients would allow us to extend the most cost-effective basic coverage to the working poor. We need to reward work. Offner is right that the challenge is to reach the *un*motivated. The answer is to motivate them.

THOMAS O'BRIEN
*Horizon Institute for Policy Solutions*
*Charlottesville, Virginia*

## Smoke alarm

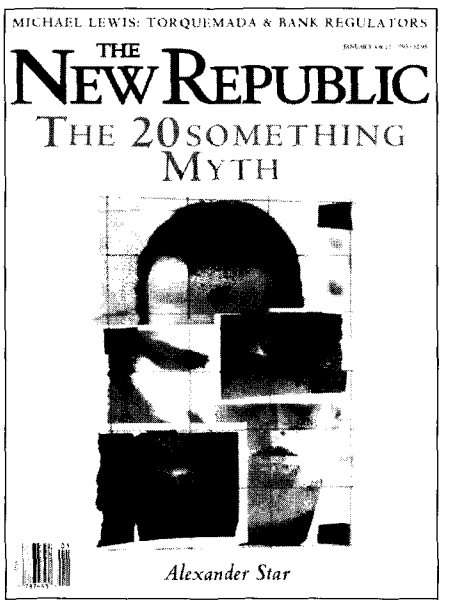
**To the editors:**

I know there's no point arguing with someone as far gone as Martin Peretz, but somehow I can't resist. In his Cambridge Diarist ("Durable Ideology," January 4 & 11), he declares: "I believe anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism are not different phenomena. Anti-Zionists believe the Jewish people is the one nation in the world not entitled to self-determination and that exclusion is certainly anti-Semitic. In any case those who are 'merely' anti-Zionist routinely make common cause with anti-Semites."

Imagine, however, how the shoe might feel on the other foot. A substantial portion of the black middle class in this country believes, with equal fervor, that racism and hostility to racial quotas are also one and the same. They believe that blacks in America have been injured as a group and are therefore entitled to restitution as a group. When someone approaches with NEW REPUBLIC-type arguments to the effect that racial quotas do little to benefit poor blacks while doing much to harm and embitter blameless whites, they're reminded of how people who say this sort of thing "routinely" make common cause with David Duke.

Like Peretz, they subscribe to a very simple worldview. Either you're with 'em or agin 'em, pro-quota or a bloody racist. With Peretz, you're either pro-Israel or a bloody anti-Semite. Could anything be more crude?

DANIEL LAZARE
*New York, New York*




**To the editors:**

I applaud Martin Peretz's condemnation of blatant anti-Semitism in the black and liberal communities, which too often passes as civilized conduct. However, I was shocked to read that Hasidim gives Peretz "the willies" because of their "close-mindedness" and "clannish" behavior. Unless he is totally blind, he must realize that assigning evil characteristics to individuals by virtue of the group they were born into is bald-faced bigotry by definition. His sense of privilege to insult and condemn one group of Jews because he shares in that ancestry makes his statements all the more repugnant.

Although his prejudice will undoubtedly resist a confrontation with the truth, it is well known that the Lubavitcher Hasidim, for example, run a worldwide network of educational and social services specifically targeted at the religiously unaffiliated. The fact that some Hasidim lead insular lives reflects their faithful commitment to the teachings of the Jewish prophets and their dedication to Jewish laws observed by Peretz's ancestors for centuries. Ancestors to whom Peretz's bigotry would undoubtedly give "the willies."

ARTHUR E. SCHWARTZ
*New York, New York*

**To the editors:**

When I point out that anti-Semitism flourishes in lots of closets in the United States I get more arguments from Jews than from others. Some of my best friends are Christians who yield to a social climate that's inhospitable to classic anti-Semitism but permits a feeling that Israel is too uppity. It is unpleasant to acknowledge that anti-Semitism permeates our culture, but denial is only postponement. Perhaps Martin Peretz's Diarist will be a smoke alarm for people who think the fire is out.

A. E. P. WALL
*Editor, Central Florida Episcopalian*
*Orlando, Florida*

## Title disease

**To the editors:**

I had to laugh at Michael Kinsley's TRB column discussing the political positions Bill Clinton will soon fill in the federal bureaucracy ("The Prune Book," January 4 & 11). I twice suffered from title disease, having served as Special Assistant to the Associate Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce and as General Counsel of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. In fairness, though, the Plum Book is not the only public or private publication that "takes on a certain incantatory power when treated as poetry and read aloud." Consider, for example, TNR's masthead:

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Editor (1)
Literary Editor (1)
Executive Editor (1)
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Senior Editors (6)
Editor, New Republic Books (1)
Contributing Editors (20)
Associate Editor (1)
Associate Managing Editor (1)
Assistant to the Editors (1)
Assistant Literary Editor (1)

Stuck at the bottom of the editorial masthead are four people with the title "Reporter-Researcher." Are they the people who actually *write* TNR?

CLEMENT D. ERHARDT III
*Washington, D.C.*



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THE NEW REPUBLIC

FEBRUARY 8, 1993

# CLINTON AND SADDAM

There was grousing in the festive capital last week about the American raids on Iraq, as Democrats accused the outgoing administration of "headline-grabbing" and generally trying to ruin the party. No doubt a petty and partisan motive could be found among President Bush's reasons for the strikes, but it is no less petty and partisan to reduce this just and significant policy to politics. Anyway, the strikes failed to spoil the party. There was something a little chilling about the simultaneity of the bombs over Bagdad and the fireworks over the Mall, but the Democrats did not seem chilled.

And there was one sense in which the outgoing commander in chief was perfectly right to have the incoming commander in chief in mind. In the aftermath of the first strike against Iraq, which Bill Clinton supported, he expressed some personal feelings about Saddam Hussein to *The New York Times* that must have vexed George Bush (and certainly vexed us). "I am not obsessed with the man," he said. "But I am obsessed with standards of conduct embodied in those U.N. accords, and if he were sitting on the couch I would urge him to change his behavior. You know, if he spent half, maybe even a third, of the time worrying about the welfare of his people that he spends worrying about where he positions his SAM missiles and whether he can push the boundaries of the cease-fire agreement, I think he would be a stronger leader and in a lot better shape in the long run.... But my job is not to pick [the Iraqis'] rulers for them. I always tell everybody that I am a Baptist. I believe in deathbed conversions. If he wants a different relationship with the United States and the United Nations, all he has to do is change his behavior."

These are startling observations. (And no less startling was Clinton's weird denial, on the following day, that he had ever made them. The voluble Clinton had better understand that there is no more shooting the breeze, that a president's speech is a president's action.) They bring to mind Jimmy Carter's assurance that he suffered no "inordinate fear of communism." More generally, there is an alarming innocence to them. Is it really still necessary to point out again that foreign policy is not one of the helping professions, and that a war is not always fought between rational actors who can be relied upon to make utilitarian calculations of profit and loss, and that it is in the interest of the peoples of Iraq, and in the interest of the United States, that Saddam be a weaker leader, not a stronger one, and that in the long run he be not in better shape, but in no shape at all? If Saddam were sitting on the couch, Clinton should have him promptly seized, or else fear for his life, for the only deathbeds that interest Saddam are the deathbeds of others.

Clinton's condescension toward an "obsession" with Saddam is a little cheap. If it is possible to be less "obsessed" with Saddam in 1993, that is because Saddam was seriously diminished as a strategic threat in 1991, and that was achieved by means of a war about which Clinton was famously of two minds. It is no wonder, then, that Bush, Eagleburger, Cheney, Powell and company might have worried about the continuity of American policy toward Iraq. The raids last week did not inflict significant damage on Iraq, but they accomplished two important things: they held Saddam defensively in place for Clinton, and they tethered Clinton (whose advisers were in the Situation Room) to the war against Saddam.

Then there is the matter of Clinton's "obsession" with the U.N. requirements, and his preferred style of opposing this tyrant who pursued a nuclear weapon with an alacrity that finally justified the fears of the most dire alarmists. That style is, in a word, legalism. In foreign policy, legalism is almost always another instance of innocence, and misplaced rationalism. As Al Gore pointed out on "Meet the Press," the reason for ridding his country and his region of Saddam has very little to do with a compliance with resolutions and very much to do with Saddam's continuing war against his own subjects, the Kurds and the Shiites most savagely. The struggle with Saddam, in sum, is a matter of first principles, moral and strategic. He is not only an unspeakably evil man, he is an unspeakably tough evil man. And he is taking the measure of the new American president's own toughness. •



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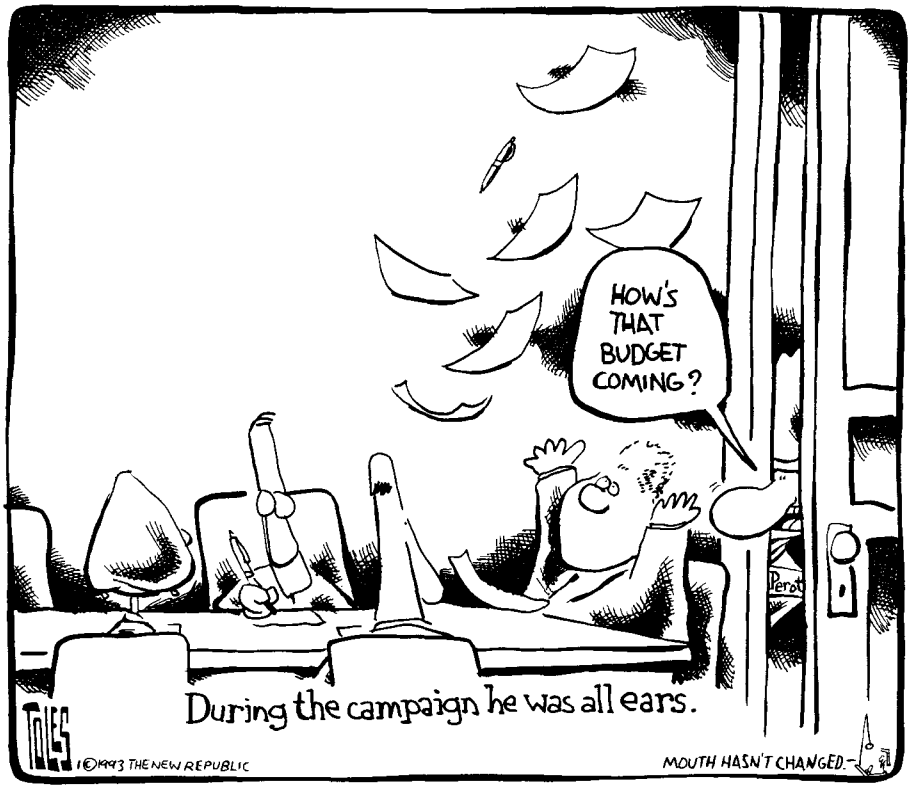
# NOTEBOOK

ZOE'S CHOICE: Zoe Baird is the most promising nominee to Bill Clinton's Cabinet; intellectually brave, politically incorrect, experienced and graceful, she was Clinton's most refreshing appointment. As Jeffrey Rosen pointed out last week (see "Danny and Zoe," February 1), Baird is much better equipped than the other candidates Clinton considered to challenge the interest groups that bedevil the legal profession. But in light of the law Baird knowingly broke, we find it hard to see how she can credibly head the Department of Justice. Baird concedes she broke the law, a law that others, with far fewer means and less education than she has, obey. (Has the "forgotten middle class" been forgotten already?) The law is burdensome, but perfectly clear. To use Baird's gender, as some commentators have (though Baird has not), to defend her is an insult to the many working women who find ways to care for their families legally. We understand the temptation to balance Baird's single lapse against her obvious virtues; we understand too that there are many other Cabinet nominees whom we would rather see go before Baird (Ron Brown, for a start); but this is not ultimately a matter of the character of Baird's person, but of the character of her office. Some principles have to be affirmed, and one is that the attorney general must obey the law. Clinton claimed in the campaign that he was a president for people "who play by the rules." With his dismissal of this issue, he has thrown a critical pledge out the window, and the voters are right to feel betrayed. It's an agonizing call, and we do not know Baird's fate as we go to press, but we believe that she should now withdraw.




CLINTONISM WATCH: "In short, Mr. Brown has taken and will take all appropriate actions to avoid even the appearance of conflict of interest. He has conducted his public life with the utmost integrity. There is no evidence upon which to suggest otherwise. As Governor Clinton has stated from the moment he was elected, changing the system of special interest influence in Washington is a major goal of his administration." —George Stephanopoulos, in a letter to *The New York Times*, January 13. Readers are invited to submit other examples of the president, or members of his staff, squaring very round circles or embracing mutually contradictory goals, while demanding blind faith from the rest of us.

MURDER WE SANCTION: The death of 22-year-old Seaman Allen Schindler in October is the latest—and one of the most moving—reasons why President Clinton needs to lift the military's gay ban as affirmatively and as quickly as possible. Schindler was bludgeoned to death near the naval base in Sasebo, Japan, so severely that he could be recognized only from tattoos on his forearms. Two fellow sailors were arrested for the crime, one of whom, having confessed, was given four months in prison in exchange for testifying against his alleged co-murderer. The Navy first refused to give any details of the incident, even the cause of death or whether a weapon was used. If not for gay rights groups and the *L.A. Times*, the case may never even have become public. It's clear that intimidation of homosexuals in the military is growing as the gay ban nears its end. If Clinton wants to protect the people he's trying to help, he needs to make his action not a mealy-mouthed compromise, but an assertion of the principle involved: that gay Americans have the same rights as straight Americans and that murdering them should be discouraged.

COJONES OR GALAS?: "I'd heard the rumor, and now it's confirmed. When Bill Clinton launches his presidency, Hispanics will have no balls." —*Hispanic Link*, December 14, 1992 •



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# PARTING SHOTS

*By Fred Barnes*

President Bush departed the presidency the same way he conducted it, thinking about the use of military force, talking about the use of force and actually using force. No doubt he wants to be remembered as the man who sent American forces on successful missions to Panama, the Persian Gulf and Somalia, then back to the Gulf again. His legacy is safe, but Bush wasn't taking any chances. A memo by speechwriter Andy Ferguson urged Bush to give a farewell address on healing divisions in America caused by rampant multiculturalism and special pleading for government funds. "I don't want to give one of those right-wing speeches," Bush snapped. Later he got a draft of a farewell speech on the family, read it over a weekend at Camp David ten days before leaving office and decided not to deliver it. By then, an aide said, "he'd soured on the whole idea" of a televised Oval Office speech on domestic issues, the bane of his presidency.

The original plan was for Bush to give three farewell addresses: one on general foreign policy, one on defense and national security issues, one on domestic policy. That schedule fell apart after Bush delivered the foreign policy speech at Texas A&M on December 15. An attack on isolationism, the speech was vague and attracted minimal attention. Even among White House aides it was regarded as a resounding flop. This made the national security speech more important. As drafted by Richard Haas of the National Security Council and speechwriter Dan McGroarty, it became what the first speech was supposed to have been but wasn't: a guide to when America should intervene militarily. In an odd way, the second speech, delivered at West Point on January 5, set the stage for the flurry of limited bombing raids on Iraq in Bush's final days.

Bush took an unusual interest in the West Point speech. "He's a serious foreign policy thinker when he has time," said an adviser. Bush read at least three drafts, scribbled notes on them and excised passages he didn't like. He joined the internal White House debate over how specific a nation should be in spelling out when it will and won't intervene. There were roughly three positions. Pentagon officials and Brent Scowcroft, the national security adviser, were leery of any guidelines, believing the use of force should be decided case by case. Others, including Haas and ultimately Bush, felt broad principles of intervention should be enunciated. The third position supports rigid guidelines. No one favored this.

Rather than offer guidelines or principles, McGroarty sought to have Bush explain his theory of intervention by analogy. He proposed the garden hose analogy used by President Franklin Roosevelt to justify Lend Lease (providing your hose to a neighbor whose house is on fire). It could be employed to explain why Bush sent troops to Somalia, which has no neighbors equipped to help, but not Bosnia, which has plenty of closer neighbors than the United States. Scowcroft liked the analogy, but Haas didn't. It was dropped. In the end, Bush decided to declare there's no formula for intervention and then, contradicting himself, present a five-part formula.

"In the complex new world we are entering," he said in the speech, "there can be no single or simple set of fixed rules for using force. Inevitably, the question of military intervention requires judgment. Each and every case is different." Only not that different. There are, Bush insisted, "principles to inform our decisions" on the use of force. What principles? "Using military force makes sense as a policy where the stakes warrant, where and when force can be effective, where no other policies are likely to prove effective, where its application can be limited in scope and time, and where the potential benefits justify the potential costs and sacrifice."

Note the drift in the principles toward restricted, not massive, use of force. This is significant in view of events that began the same day as the speech. A "principals meeting" was held in Scowcroft's office: Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger, CIA Director Robert Gates, General Colin Powell and Scowcroft. They agreed Saddam Hussein should be given a deadline to take new anti-aircraft batteries out of southern Iraq. The SAM batteries had been formed in triangles, making them serious threats to American warplanes on patrol. After their meeting, the principals marched down the hall to the Oval Office to get Bush's assent to an ultimatum. No problem there. So on January 6, the Iraqi ambassador to the United Nations was handed an official "demarche," giving Saddam forty-eight hours to disperse the batteries. On January 8 it appeared they had been dispersed. Just to be certain, Scowcroft and Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater hung around the White House on Saturday, January 9, before announcing the Iraqis had responded satisfactorily.

But on January 11, the batteries were being restored, Bush got together with his National Security Council and bombing targets were discussed. The Pentagon wanted a full-scale air attack, hitting airfields and military headquarters as well as the SAM sites. Bush's preference for a raid "limited in scope and time" had been laid out six days earlier at West Point. He was worried that if planes were shot down, he might leave office with American pilots in captivity. Also, he didn't want to look as though he was picking a fight or acting out of pique at Saddam. And he didn't want to leave President Clinton



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without stronger military options to take if necessary—or with a war on his hands in the Middle East. So only the SAM sites were targeted. The night attack was largely a failure, requiring a follow-up attack on January 18.

Meanwhile, a fresh provocation had erupted on January 7, when Iraq said U.N. inspection planes would no longer be allowed to fly freely over Iraq. That prompted another ultimatum, issued after Bush departed for a final fling at Camp David on January 15. It was supposed to be a weekend of nostalgia. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney arrived on January 16, and Scowcroft drove up from Washington (he and Mulroney are chums). Bush missed the televised appearance that day of Iraqi Prime Minister Tariq Aziz. He was busy greeting Mulroney's helicopter. But aides at the White House watched Aziz on CNN, and Bush soon learned Iraq was still defiant on U.N. inspections.

Bush got up early on Sunday, January 17, giving one last performance of his skillful handling of foreign leaders. He hit the phone, chain-dialing British Prime Minister John Major, his favorite ally, and French President François Mitterrand, among others. He talked to his national security advisers in a conference call. And the decision was to fire cruise missiles on the $6 billion nuclear facility near Baghdad. Why not planes? "The main reason," explained Fitzwater, "is because it did not put U.S. personnel in jeopardy."

Once bombing began on January 13, the last chance for a Bush domestic farewell vanished. He didn't want to speak on T.V. while bombs were dropping. If not that, he'd have found another excuse. A domestic speech from the Oval Office was "an un-Bush-like thing to do," an aide conceded. Using military force wasn't. •

**Why we still need missile defense.**

# STAR WARS II

*By Frank J. Gaffney Jr.*

The single greatest military vulnerability the Clinton administration will inherit is its inability to protect the United States against attacks by ballistic missiles. The nation cannot provide comprehensive missile defense protection to its forces overseas or to its allies already at risk of at least primitive missile strikes. Within the next four years the United States itself may be exposed. Unless the new administration takes steps to render the country less vulnerable to missile attacks, it is likely that a hostile power will try to exploit that vulnerability.

Unfortunately, many in Washington still believe that the danger of a deliberate missile attack on the United States has essentially been eliminated by recent political developments in the former Soviet Union. This perception was reinforced when CIA Director Robert Gates predicted last summer that it will be ten years before rogue nations such as Iraq, Iran, North Korea and Libya have long-range missiles capable of attacking North America. These assessments, along with tremendous budget pressures, have led Congress to reduce funding of missile defense programs—despite the Gulf war's graphic demonstration of the power of even relatively crude ballistic missiles. Indeed, just a year after Congress passed the Missile Defense Act of 1991—which stipulated that deployments of strategic missile defenses should begin by 1996, or as soon as possible thereafter—it acted to set aside a firm deployment date and stripped the project of roughly 30 percent of the funds requested by the Bush administration.

It is time to dispense with the partisan and ideological baggage that has precluded effective responses to rapidly changing strategic circumstances. From the outset Bill Clinton should establish his commitment to the deployment of ground and space-based defensive systems.

Even in the former Soviet Union, there is a real potential for missile attacks. Upon returning from a recent trip to Moscow, Senator Sam Nunn warned that the instability within the former Soviet Union could have dire consequences: "From the point of view of an accidental or an unauthorized kind of missile going astray or . . . proliferation of nuclear materials, the danger of that's gone up." The old Soviet arsenal poses yet another danger: Moscow is offering to sell some of its long-range ballistic missiles as "space-launch vehicles." This includes the so-called START-1 missile adapted from Moscow's SS-25 and SS-20 missiles.

The START-1's commercial availability underscores one reason why the CIA's sanguineness about long-range missile proliferation is unfounded: more than twenty countries currently have or are acquiring some form of space-launch vehicle. Like the START-1, these vehicles will offer their owners the capability to put payloads into low Earth orbit and to deliver them ballistically over intercontinental ranges. A further reason for discounting the intelligence community's rosy projections of future ballistic missile threats is the ease with which shorter-range ballistic missiles can be "clustered" to give them intercontinental ranges. Iraq's Tamouz I missile, for example, was fabricated from five Scud missiles. Iran, North Korea, Syria and India, among others, already possess tactical missiles capable of being cobbled together to create crude ICBMs.

Yet on the campaign trail, Clinton pledged to reduce defense spending by some $60 billion over the next five years—beyond the cuts promised by President Bush. He pointed to SDI and its space-based elements as the source for some $15 billion in savings. In fact, there simply is not $15 billion allocated to space-based defenses under Bush's five-year SDI plan.

Even if there were, the space-based components are



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the last elements that should be eviscerated by an administration keen on saving money. Space-based defenses would be cheaper and more effective than a global defense relying exclusively on ground-based theater and strategic anti-ballistic missile systems. The latter are limited by their speed and the range of their guidance mechanisms to defending small portions of the Earth's surface. Even if the nation were willing to make the required investment, such systems would only be effective if they were actually in place where and when they were needed. That would require permanent stations scattered across the globe. Mobile ground systems have proved difficult to deploy in an emergency. The Gulf war was instructive: it took the equivalent of 450 huge transport plane flights to deliver ground-based Patriot systems into the Middle East.

By contrast, orbiting space-based sensors and interceptors permit global defenses to be easily maintained. What is more, they can be acquired and operated for a fraction of the cost of ground-based systems. For less than $15 billion the United States and its allies could be reliably defended against all but the shortest-range ballistic missiles. (Small quantities of ground- or sea-based tactical interceptors could take care of this threat.) This compares very favorably with the $24 billion or so now being budgeted for a single ground-based defense site—a system that would provide protection against limited strikes to only a portion of this country and none to U.S. forces or allies overseas.

Some will argue that a missile defense program should not be undertaken because it will breach or undermine the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which prohibits the United States from deploying a territorial defense against long-range missiles. Ever since President Reagan announced SDI in March 1983, the implications for that treaty have been a bitterly divisive issue. But the end of the Soviet Union means that this impediment to such defenses can and should be removed. As a legal matter, one of the parties to the treaty no longer exists; several of its successor states now control parts of the Soviet ABM system, a fact that violates the terms of the original accord. Even Richard Nixon, whose administration is responsible for the document, has argued that it is time to "move beyond the ABM Treaty." What is more, senior Russians, including President Boris Yeltsin, have expressed an interest in collaborating with the United States in deployment of a global missile defense system.

Fortunately, Clinton expressed an openness to such new thinking during the campaign. In his speech before the Los Angeles World Affairs Council last August, he called for a "fresh assessment of the new dangers that could threaten our interests ... including the spread of weapons of mass destruction." He observed that the United States "can't afford to wait until a host of Third World nations acquire arsenals full of First World weapons."

Indeed, the United States can no longer remain confident of its ability to deter attacks through the threat of retaliation. Countries now arming themselves with ballistic missiles and animated by messianic or megalomaniacal ambitions may prove indifferent to, or undissuaded by, the cold war prospect of mutual assured destruction. Should deterrence fail, the horrific consequences of that failure would permanently scar the country and the president. The technological and financial means to avoid such a peril are available only if the new leadership has the foresight and political fortitude to bring them to bear.

FRANK J. GAFFNEY JR., a former senior official in the Reagan Defense Department, is director of the Center for Security Policy in Washington.

**FRICKLEY POSTCARD**

# BLACKNESS

*By Simon Sebag Montefiore*

Every mantelpiece in every house in the doomed mining village of Frickley, in south Yorkshire, boasts an old-fashioned police helmet, an Edwardian mining lamp and a lithograph of the Frickley Brass Band seeing off its soldier-miners on their way to the Boer War of 1899. The helmets were captured from the hated police in the 1926 General Strike that almost became the British Revolution, symbolizing the traditional Marxism of Britain's forgotten world of mining villages. The brass Davy mining lamps represent the working-class values of hard work and Christian living. Most strangely of all in a Marxist stronghold, the Boer War represents the twin icons of King and Empire.

The Empire is gone, Marxism is discredited and now Prime Minister John Major has announced that the British mining industry itself is doomed. With it, Frickley will be gone forever. But the death of this village has united Britons, from patricians to plumbers, against the Major government, which was forced to announce that it would reconsider its proposal to close down a vast section of Britain's state-owned coal mining industry.

The tiny, one-carriage train chugs across the green, rolling moors until suddenly Frickley rears out of the fog: a hamlet of Edwardian red-brick two-story terraced houses crowded in neat lines around two huge mine shafts, overshadowed by brooding slagheaps that appear as if at any moment they might crush the whole place. Chick Pickin, Frickley's National Union of Mineworkers president and thus the village's effective ruler, who meets me at the station, is beaming with roguish pride. He has just ordered his men to drive several juggernauts of raw coal all the way down to the prosperous south and dump it at the grand gates of the palatial



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Oxfordshire mansion of Michael Heseltine, the Cabinet minister responsible for the coal industry.

There was a time when Pickin's NUM struck real terror into the other England: in 1974 NUM paralyzed the country and overthrew the Heath government. That all changed in their ultimately disastrous strike in 1984, when the mighty NUM challenged the Thatcher government. In the ensuing battle, the barons of coal were defeated by the Iron Lady, who refused to meet any of their demands.

But Chick Pickin, 51, my host in the village and "down pit" since he was 15, is already planning a final battle against the government as we sit drinking our "cup'a'cha" (cup of tea) and beans-on-toast-with-bangers (sausages) at high tea (dinner), which is the main meal in Frickley, eaten at 4:40 p.m., after the shifts come up. "If government doesn't listen to reason by March, we're gonna go to war, ye'll see, because we got NOWT to lose! NOWT. It'll be our Custer's Last Stand. We might 'ave to break law. Stop the whole country like French farmers. We could that. We've done it before! That was m'dad's strike," he says proudly, referring to the General Strike.

Like everyone in Frickley, Chick, the brother, son, grandson, brother-in-law and cousin of coal miners, speaks in a thick Yorkshire accent, which drops all definite articles, uses the old "ye" and "thee," and is almost incomprehensible to the southern English and totally so to anyone else. Frickley's heroes are the miners who were killed in its many strikes, most recently in 1984. "Our proudest tradition," Pickin tells me, "is the annual march to remember young David Jones, good lad killed in 1984 strike. Our Frickley colliery brass band plays the Frickley anthem. Ye should see it. That's a fine sight." The most loathed ghosts of Frickley are the "scabs" or "blacklegs." The families of scabs from 1926 are still remembered by Pickin, and he can even point out their houses, because no family has moved in Frickley for decades. "Once a scab, always a scab," spits Pickin. "I know there are some things worse than scabs, like messing around with kiddies and rape and such like, but ye must understand that being a scab to us is like *raping* the very families of striking miners. Frickley 'ad only four scabs in 1984. They got their comeuppances: one died of a heart attack. Well, I'd never speak to a scab again, they're lepers to me, but some of m'lads'd like to do worse things to them, if ye know what I mean?"

Frickley, once the home of Robin Hood, is today ruled by fear and hatred, like a besieged fortress. Every person we pass greets Pickin by name, asking him if the latest rumor of firings is true. Over at the pit itself, the miners, coming off shift, black-eyed, pot-bellied, mustachioed giants with faces as sooty and teeth as white as Al Jolson's, rush over to Pickin to ask the latest. "This's a game of cat'n'mouse betwixt us and management," Pickin explains to the miners.

The working men's clubs are the backbone of Frickley's doomed world; mostly they are named after the British war against Afrikaaner Boers in South Africa that ended in 1902. The two biggest clubs, the Empire and the Pretoria, are frozen at the end of the last century. Even the cabaret acts that perform on stage every Saturday night have barely changed since the music hall era. The walls are covered by regimental imperial banners and sepia photographs of miners who went so proudly to fight the Boers wearing the khaki and the scarlet.

But the best club is called "The Niggers." It was the headquarters of the blacklegs in 1926, and it never lost the nickname. When I, an outsider, darken the doorstep, the snooker player does not hit his ball; the buxom bar lady stares; the dart-thrower freezes; card players keep holding their hands up, but their eyes swivel to watch me; a gnarled old man who has lowered his head to sip at a frothy pint does not sip at all. Everyone in the Niggers is or was a miner. Finally, an old fellow in a cloth cap asks Pickin, "Where'e'from, Chick?" Pickin says I am from London. Everyone laughs: a writer from London coming into the Niggers. I don't even try to explain that I am from America. The old man explains: "W've'ad some photographers from Holland, but you're our first scribe!"

A retired miner named Terence Carter, aged 61, who typifies Frickley's xenophobic defiance, pulls me down beside him with a miner's iron grip: "Ye wants local color, London Scribe," he says ominously. "I'll give ye local color. But if ye lies about us, I'll come down to London and *kick* in door of your editor." Once we have that out of the way, Carter lets fly a barrage of spleen-venting, waving his fist in my face. Here are some of his sweeter wishes: "Rupert Murdoch should be hanged from the highest gallows in England!" and "When I see government ministers on tele, I get so angry-like, I could smash my fist right through screen!"

But if there is hate in Frickley for the modern world, there is also the saddest, most poetical nostalgia. After I buy him another beer, Carter gives a soliloquy so poignant that it sums up the tragedy of the death of the mining villages: "This is the finest country in world. Bar none! That's what father told me. Bar none. These pillocks in government don't love this country more than I do. That's impossible." Like all the miners, Carter is as keen on the monarchy as he is on Karl Marx. Pickin's attitude is typical: "Monarchy's why we haven't had Hitler in England. It's harder to happen with monarchy. Imagine what Thatcher would have been like without royalty, and beside, they've never done us any harm." Steve Tully tells me there are no blacks or Indians in Frickley: "Ye won't see any black faces in Frickley. Maybe they don't want to be miners ...," and no homosexuals. "Oh no, Frickley's too close-knit for that. I don't know any in Frickley. I suppose there must be some but we can't see them, but ye'll find they leave fast. Miners are macho, ye know. It's too much like a family for them to fit in 'ere."

"Ours is a whole culture! With its own music, the brass bands, and our own football team. Ours is a whole culture that they're killing," says Pickin when we finally find the bandleader (son of the last bandleader) and double



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bass player of the Carlton Main Frickley Colliery Brass Band, which is famous in England, having made seven records and even had a No. 2 hit in the charts. Ray Sykes, who has played in the brass band for forty years, since he was 7, sits in the old red-brick band hall playing his double bass in his Frickley Band blazer and tie. The rest of the band is not there today. So Sykes sits among the abandoned drums, chairs and lecterns in the band hall that smells mustily of the damp music sheets of "Rule Britannia," "Dambusters" and the "Floral Dance." He recites the words of "Merrie England" ("There'll always be an England and England will be free, if England means as much to you as England means to me . . .") then begins to play it as if he were performing with the whole orchestra. But there's no one else there. Chick listens sadly. "There won't be anyone left in Frickley after mines close." "What about the ghosts?" I say. "Aye," he says smiling, "maybe the ghosts." And the band master goes on playing, all alone in the band hall, with the thumping rhythm of the whole Frickley brass band in better days ringing gloriously in his ears. As I say goodbye to Terence Carter in the Niggers, he grips my hand, with tears running down his cheeks, and says, "Ye're not the same as us! Ye haven't been brought up as hard! Ye haven't seen what we've seen!"

SIMON SEBAG MONTEFIORE is the author of the novel *King's Parade* (Penguin).

**Black soldiers and Buchenwald.**

# THE EXAGGERATORS

*By Jeffrey Goldberg*

It was a rare moment: the Rev. Jesse Jackson, surrounded by white-haired Holocaust survivors, embracing Leib Glanz, a bearded Hasidic rabbi on the stage of the Apollo Theater. The occasion was last month's black-Jewish celebration of the "Liberators," the PBS documentary about all-black Army units that, according to the film, helped capture Buchenwald and Dachau. The sponsors of the screening, Time Warner and a host of rich and influential New Yorkers, billed the film as an important tool in the rebuilding of a black-Jewish alliance.

But the display of brotherhood turned out to be illusory. The next night Glanz was nearly chased out of synagogue by angry Hasidim for the transgression of consorting with Jackson. More significantly, the film's backers and the press failed to point out that the unit featured most prominently in the "Liberators" had no hand in the capture of either Dachau or Buchenwald. "It's a lie. We were nowhere near these camps when they were liberated," says E. G. McConnell, an original member of the 761st Tank Battalion, who says he cooperated with the filmmakers until he came to believe that they were faking material.

McConnell, along with a Buchenwald survivor and a second member of the 761st, was flown to the camp in 1991 to film what turned out to be one of the most moving, and most fraudulent, scenes of the documentary. As the three men tour the site, the narrator speaks of their "return" to the camp. McConnell says: "I first went to Buchenwald in 1991 with PBS, not the 761st."

Nina Rosenblum, who co-produced the film with Bill Miles in association with WNET, New York's public television station, admits that the narration of the scene "may be misleading." But she says that McConnell can't be trusted. "You can't speak to him because he's snapped. He was hit in the head with shrapnel and was severely brain-damaged." McConnell, a retired mechanic for TWA, laughs when told of Rosenblum's statement. "If I was so disturbed, why did they use me in the film?" he asks.

McConnell's claim is supported by a host of veterans of the 761st, including the battalion's commander, the president of its veterans' association, two sergeants and two company commanders, among them the black commander of C Company. Two of the company's soldiers assert in the film that they liberated Dachau. A statement issued by historians at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum also states that they could find no evidence that the 761st Battalion helped free either camp. "It's totally inaccurate," says Charles Gates, the former captain who commanded C Company. "[The men] couldn't have been where they say they were because the camp was sixty miles away from where we were on the day [of liberation]."

Paul Bates, the colonel who commanded the battalion, confirmed Gates's account. "In our after-action reports, there is no indication that we were near either one of [the camps]," Bates says. According to Bates, tanks of the 761st were assigned to the 71st Infantry Division, whose fighting path across Germany was sixty to 100 miles away from the two camps. "The 71st does not claim to have liberated those camps," he says.

Several Holocaust survivors are quoted in the film and in the companion book published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich as saying they were liberated by blacks of these units. But Christopher Ruddy, a New York writer who has conducted extensive research on the film, says that two of the survivors featured in the "Liberators" told him they were no longer sure when they first saw black soldiers. One of the survivors who appeared with Jackson at the Apollo confirmed that he too was unsure of what had happened at Buchenwald. "It's hard to say now. I know there were black soldiers in the camp, but I don't know when exactly," says the survivor.

Rosenblum angrily denounces the film's critics as Holocaust revisionists and racists. "These people are [of]



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the same mentality that says that the Holocaust didn't happen," she says. In the course of a telephone interview, she declares: "There's tremendous racism in the Jewish community. How people who have been through the Holocaust can be racist is completely incomprehensible. To think that black people are less, which is what most Jewish people think, I can't understand it." She adds that racism of the type exhibited by the film's critics is what kept all-black combat units from receiving proper recognition in the first place. "The 761st fought for thirty-three years to get the Presidential Unit Citation. People don't want the truth of our history to come out," she says. (WNET says it stands by the film's veracity.)

The film's focus on events that appear never to have occurred seems all the more perplexing considering the true achievements of the 761st. Among other accomplishments, it played an important role in the liberation of Gunskirchen, a satellite of the Mauthausen concentration camp, and its performance at the Battle of the Bulge was exemplary. The documentary approaches accuracy, the veterans say, when it focuses on the unit's heroic battles both against the Germans and against discrimination in its own Army. But the unit citation eventually awarded to the veterans by Jimmy Carter does not list the liberation of either Buchenwald or Dachau as an achievement of the unit.

"It's no great accomplishment to liberate a concentration camp, not compared to fighting the German army," says Philip Latimer, the president of the 761st's veterans' organization. "What we're concerned about is our combat performance. The [unit] has a lot to be proud of... and I don't want to see it blamed for this documentary. I don't want the unit to be hurt."

Questions have also been raised about the 183rd Combat Engineer Battalion, which the filmmakers say played a role in the liberation of Buchenwald. The unit's then commander, Lawrence Fuller, a former deputy director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, says the 183rd only visited Buchenwald after its liberation, when General Patton ordered units in the sector to see proof of German atrocities. Fuller says that the documentary's producers never contacted him to discuss the unit's history.

Leon Bass, a retired school principal who served in the 183rd, calls himself a liberator in the film and in the frequent lectures he gives on the Holocaust. But Bass says he does not remember exactly when he entered the camp. "I don't know whether we were first or second.... We didn't go in with guns blazing," Bass recalls. "There was just a handful of [us]. I was only there for two or three hours. The rest of the company came later."

The "Liberators," fueled by the public relations success at the Apollo, is gaining momentum. The Rainbow Coalition is sponsoring a similar gala in Los Angeles in March. Rosenblum tells of a packed calendar of showings with co-sponsors ranging from the Simon Wiesenthal Center to the American Jewish Committee. And copies of the documentary will be distributed to all New York City junior and senior high schools, according to the school board president's spokeswoman, Linda Scott. The cost of the schools project, Rosenblum says, is being picked up by Elizabeth Rohatyn, the wife of Felix Rohatyn, who co-sponsored the Apollo showing, although Scott says that several philanthropists are vying for the honor of buying the tapes for the schools. According to a memorandum on the documentary circulating at the school board headquarters, the film will be used to "examine the effects of racism on African-American soldiers and on Jews who were in concentration camps ... to explain the role of African-American soldiers in liberating Jews from Nazi concentration camps [and] to reveal the involvement of Jews as 'soldiers' in the civil rights movement."

The documentary continues to be supported by a number of influential Jews. The p.r. guru Howard Rubenstein, who is a vice president of New York's Jewish Community Relations Council (and who also flacks for radio station WLIB, known for the anti-Semitic invective it regularly airs), worked pro bono on the Apollo event and continues to plug the documentary, despite having heard that it is misleading. "I have no reason to distrust Nina," he says. "She seemed very able and honest. I hope and pray it's accurate." Peggy Tishman, a former president of the JCRC and a co-host of the evening at the Apollo, is sticking by the documentary too. Tishman, who was introduced at the Apollo by Representative Charles Rangel—who called her "Peggy Tisch"—says the documentary is "good for the Holocaust."

"Why would anybody want to exploit the idea that this is a fraud?" she says. "What we're trying to do is make New York a better place for you and me to live." She claims that the accuracy of the film is not the issue. What is important is the way it can bring Jews and blacks into "dialogue." "There are a lot of truths that are very necessary," Tishman says. "This is not a truth that's necessary."

JEFFREY GOLDBERG is New York bureau chief for *The Forward.*

**Sharon Kelly's mayoral failure.**

# PRATTFALL

*By Ken Cummins*

Sharon Pratt Kelly won election as mayor of the nation's capital two years ago after promising to cleanse the city of the taint of Marion Barry. It was a mighty promise. During his twelve-year tenure (which ended with a 1990 conviction on cocaine and perjury charges) Barry had openly incited racial



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animosity, larded the city government with layers of bureaucrats and wrecked the city's fragile relationship with Congress. In the five-way race to replace him, Kelly, a former utility executive, was the only candidate willing to challenge Barry's legacy. Overcoming her political inexperience and public awkwardness, she said she would mend the soul of the city and "take a shovel" to the mountainous city government, promising to cut the 48,000-person payroll by 2,000.

Now, midway through her first term, with a looming financial crisis and a crumbling political base, Kelly is resorting to the same tactics she once decried. She hurls racial accusations at her opponents, couches political issues in racial terms and has pitted the city's white and black wards against each other. And she has yet to make good on her promise to tame the city payroll. (Kelly claims she has eliminated more than 1,600 city jobs, a figure challenged by the city council and refuted by some news accounts. Auditors are currently trying to pinpoint the exact size of the District government.)

SHARON PRATT KELLY BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Late last year, when the mayor discovered that her government deficit was $336 million—thirteen times larger than she had projected just four months earlier—she cast the problem in racial hues. Kelly told receptive audiences that the city faces a fiscal crisis because $18 billion of the $29 billion in income generated here annually is earned by suburban residents, mostly white, whom Congress has shielded from D.C. taxes. "It is something straight out of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*," she declared.

A month earlier she had hurled racial accusations at individual members of Congress—and Congress as a whole—after the House and Senate rejected her request for $26 million to combat crime and drug use among city youth. Kelly's attack caught members by surprise. When she first came to office, she had impressed Congress with her straightforward plan to revive the District, and romanced the federal government out of an extra $100 million for the city.

Kelly's sudden hostility alienated one of her steadiest allies, Eleanor Holmes Norton, the District's delegate to Congress. Norton is the city's most popular politician and a nationally known figure from her days as head of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under President Carter. After Norton suggested during a radio interview that Kelly devise a back-up plan for dealing with the city's deficit, which could soar to $1 billion by the end of 1993, relations between the two offices "really got ugly," says a Norton staffer.

D.C. Council chairman John Wilson points out that Kelly is quite literally following Barry's political path. Like Barry, Kelly won election on a reform platform that appealed to white voters on the city's Northwest side, and then switched on the rhetoric to shore up black votes. "She's pulling all the right cords—statehood, the commuter tax—all of these things that are not within our reach but have a tremendous impact with the electorate because they are things that we should have," Wilson says. "You start attacking on the basis of race, and everything's fine after that."

Of course, Wilson himself has his eye on the mayor's office and uses his position to launch politically damaging salvos at Kelly, but his criticism nevertheless rings true. Soon after taking office in 1991, Kelly angered many residents of Ward 3, the city's almost exclusively white, affluent section (where she won 60 percent of the vote in the five-way 1990 Democratic primary), by pushing to turn a popular Georgetown community center into a homeless shelter. Churches and civic groups sought to save the center for community use by offering to provide an equal number of beds for the homeless at scattered sites throughout the ward. But Kelly summarily rejected their offer. By standing up to Ward 3 residents and insisting that they accept the homeless in the community center, Kelly was attempting to show the poorer, predominately black, eastern side of the city that she is not the patsy of the privileged western half that put her in office. It is a



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point she is desperate to make: Kelly's weak showing among the city's poorer and solidly African-American neighborhoods in her first election quickly led to criticism that the new mayor was "corporatist," "boojie" and "high yella." "I think her friends around her keep telling her she's not black enough," says one Kelly adviser, an African American, "and because she feels she's not black enough, she keeps running from everything that's not black."

Including the incoming president. Perhaps because other black leaders popular on the east side of town—such as Jesse Jackson—reacted coolly toward Bill Clinton during the presidential primaries, Kelly also kept her distance. She refused to stand with Clinton at an April fund-raiser for him in the District and couldn't bring herself to endorse him until two days before the city's May 5 primary, in which Clinton won 85 percent of the vote. By then, her endorsement was meaningless. Kelly had to be coaxed by her aides into joining Clinton when he toured a dilapidated minority business district two weeks after the election. According to an aide, Kelly felt she had not received a proper invitation. (Despite her chilliness toward Clinton, Kelly is counting on him to fulfill her wish of turning the nation's capital into the fifty-first state and free her from having to deal with the city's "plantation overseers" in Congress. She has told supporters that she expects this to happen within the president's first 100 days, an expectation not shared by anyone else pushing for statehood.)

Kelly also seems to have gone out of her way to alienate the mainstream press. Although she has tried to maintain friendly relations with the city's black-owned newspapers, for the past several months she has refused to grant interviews to reporters of white-owned media outlets (including this one). After *The Washington Post* detailed her hostility to journalists last month, she began to warm slightly.

Yet the fiery rhetoric and staged symbolism have failed to win Kelly the support of either the black press or the city's economically disadvantaged black voters, who largely consider her arrogant, distant and cold. Many of them distrust her because of her pledge to cut the D.C. payroll, which they regard as their lifeline. Those who don't work for the District government have friends and relatives who do. In her first year Kelly laid off some 345 D.C. employees. (Many of them have since been hired back after winning legal challenges.) The layoffs sparked a movement to recall Kelly led by Reginald Davis, a University of the District of Columbia student who was on probation at the time, and John Womble, a paranoid former UDC professor who lives behind bolted and locked doors with Dobermans and a caged boa constrictor. The recall drive soon fizzled (and Davis was arrested for selling crack), but by then Kelly had already overreacted and switched course. Fearful that labor unions representing D.C. government workers would join the recall drive, she abandoned all talk of additional layoffs. Kelly's marriage to New York businessman James Kelly III at the end of her first year in office didn't improve her image. James Kelly is even more remote than his wife. A radio station he co-owns landed a $110,000 city contract to provide advertising for the D.C. Lottery Board, adding to the distrust.

At the same time, her budget waffling has angered many of the white and black middle-class professionals who put her in office precisely because of her campaign pledge to deflate the city's payroll and practice fiscal restraint. Voters who thought they would have in Kelly a dedicated, public-minded mayor have discovered that some of Kelly's priorities mirror Barry's. While the murder rate remained unchecked and the fiscal crisis deepened, Kelly spent almost four months of her first year in office out of town on trips, including a five-week vacation to Nantucket. Several of her outings, which she justified in the interest of "public relations," were on the city's tab. And last month Kelly settled into the new $143 million City Hall she persuaded the council to buy during her first six months in office. Her elegant new suite, done up in a style more befitting a corporate chief executive than an elected official, with its gilded fixtures and living quarters, may not go over well with constituents asked to endure cuts in government services, or with a government staff facing its fourth year without a pay raise. The mayor has refused to allow the public to see her new offices.

Despite her missteps, Kelly remains a formidable presence. A recent local T.V. poll found that she still enjoys a 59 percent favorable rating among D.C. voters, unusually high for an incumbent these days. Her popularity was boosted by her levelheaded handling of riots in the Mount Pleasant district, which erupted four months after she took office when a black police officer shot a Latino man; and by her negotiations to keep the Washington Redskins in the District. Such a deal seemed impossible just six months ago, when Kelly was calling the team's owner, Jack Kent Cooke, "a billionaire bully" for attempting to move his players to Virginia. But on the issues of crime, housing and the downsizing of government, a majority of those polled were less enthusiastic. Unless she can find a way to solve the city's fiscal problems, it will go into federal receivership later this year.

Perhaps sensing the precariousness of her position, Kelly has begun to make amends with her predecessor. The mayor who won office by thundering against Barry suddenly has nothing but kind words to say about him. She has begun hiring former Barry hands and has offered to expand city services in Ward 8, the city's poorest, where Barry was recently elected to the council by an overwhelming majority just seven months after his release from prison. In return, Kelly expects Barry to help her build a new political base among the black and poorer voters who rejected her the last time around and who remain wary of her. So much for her shovel.

KEN CUMMINS writes the political column "Loose Lips" for the *Washington City Paper.*



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**The failure of liberal rap.**

# HIP-HOP FLOP

*By Stephen Rodrick*

It's an old story in popular music that every threatening new sound is soon followed by a more docile clone. Buddy Holly's edgy melodies were appropriated by cuddly Ricky Nelson. The Beatles spawned the Monkees. Michael Bolton has created a lucrative career out of recording sanitized versions of soul classics. "Alternative rap" is continuing the trend. However, this process of banalization has a twist to it. To begin with, a fair amount of rap marketed itself to a mass white audience by actually accentuating its "blackness," hyping its offensiveness, misogyny and anti-white racism. But with that market conquered and a critical backlash beginning, hip-hop embarked on a new direction: "alternative rap," rap so sanitized and filled with uplift even a policeman would like it. While other forms of hip-hop have predated and coexisted with gangster rap—from the pop/albino rap of Hammer and Vanilla Ice to the music of the original rap social commentator, Grand Master Flash, with "The Message"—alternative rap is the first conscious move within male hip-hop that directly attacks the machismo ethos of the gangsters.

Gangster rappers fashion themselves as angry, gun-toting outlaws, appealing to both urban blacks and suburban whites seeking vicarious thrills. Like the gangsters, alternative groups such as Arrested Development, Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy, Basehead and Me Phi Me address the issues of the inner city, but without the familiar venom. Preaching social responsibility and espousing "can't we all get along?" themes in songs with titles like "Give A Man A Fish" and "Black Sunshine," alternative rap lyrics are a blend of do-good ethics and self-esteem hype. "Stop, evaluate what you have made of your life," go the lyrics to Me Phi Me's "(Think ...) Where Are You Going?":

> You have to do it right
> For these are the times that try men's souls
> There is no time to worry about a negative mind
> Positivity that's what we got to see
> As you teach your neighbor as you learn yourself—to be a navigator, an operator never another perpetrator ...

No wonder Kemp Mill, a Washington record chain, displays Arrested Development's and Me Phi Me's C.D.s as "rap albums appropriate for children."

To reach a mass, white audience, alternative rap is promiscuous, if not daringly so, in its musical appropriations. The performer Me Phi Me uses a tuneful acoustic guitar that conjures up images of James Taylor. Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy assimilates industrial punk noises, jazz and traditional rap into its songs. The platinum-selling Arrested Development, by far the most musically credible of the alternative rappers, mixes in soul and R&B overtones to soften its Afrocentric rhymes; its debut album found a place on many critics' top-10 lists for 1992.

Alternative rap has drawn little more than barely concealed yawns from other rappers and urban audiences; but it's gone down rather well with the usual suspects. *The Wall Street Journal*, a newspaper not known for its praise of Afrocentrist philosophy, recently ran a glowing front-page story on alternative groups: "Rap Music Is Taking a Positive Turn and Winning Fans." The piece commends Arrested Development for its humanity, compares the group's political lyrics to early Bob Dylan and includes interviews with consumers proudly purchasing a rap album for the first time in their lives. Likewise, Me Phi Me was recently praised as a "beat poet" in a *People* magazine puffer. The *Chicago Tribune*, in a story about the new rap genre, ran the headline: "Rap's new message, faint sounds of hope can now be heard in the ghetto." Noted hip-hopper Bill Moyers invited Michael Franti, who heads up Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy, to ponder voter apathy on the PBS program "Listening to America." The show's highlight came when rap master Moyers rolled a video of the Disposable Heroes' hit, "Television, Drug of a Nation":

> There's a reason why less than 10 percent of our nation reads books daily,
> Why most people think Central America means Kansas,
> Socialism means un-American and apartheid is a new headache remedy.
> Absorbed in this world, it's so hard to find us.
> It shapes our mind the most.
> Maybe the mother of our nation is sitting too close to the television, the drug of a nation, breeding ignorance and breathing radiation ...

Conventional rappers spin tales of drug busts and shootouts with evil white coppers; alternative rappers try another tack, rhyming about p.c. characters in need of a helping hand. Take Disposable Heroes' "Language of Violence," a sermon against gay bashing:

> Like a gauntlet
> the voices haunted
> walking in with his thin
> lowered chin
> he knew the names they would taunt him with
> faggot, sissy, punk, queen, queer
> although he'd never had sex in his fifteen years
> And when they harassed him
> it was for a reason
> And when they provoked him
> it became open season

"Sure the sentiments are good and I can appreciate that, but nobody wants to hear it," says one prominent New York rap promoter. "Everybody comes out to the clubs for a good time. They don't want to be preached to by some navel-gazing liberals. That song totally bombed."

Understandably, alternative rap's primary airplay has been college radio stations and crossover urban pop formats, which target middle-class whites and blacks in the



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16- to 25-year-old age group. A recent nationwide tour by Disposable Heroes, Me Phi Me and Arrested Development played mostly white alternative rock venues like the Cabaret Metro in Chicago and the 9:30 Club in Washington, D.C. These critically acclaimed shows were largely ignored by rap's cultural elite, leaving bohemian college-age whites and Huxtable generation middle-class blacks gyrating approvingly to the reformist words.

These affluent would-be hipsters have adopted alternative rap as a reflexive reaction to the sudden liberal distaste for the message their street-wise counterparts promote—the racism, violence against women and homophobia that are often inextricable from "authentic" hip-hop. At its core, alternative rap is a way to make rap safe for white liberals. *Vibe*, perhaps the rap bible for white people—edited by a white, gay male—ran an essay in its premiere issue by Greg Tate, an African-American writer. Wedged in the latest Time Warner marketing venture, Tate's essay blamed the L.A. riots on rampant consumerism, bemoaned the "agendaless" nature of rap and urged rappers to address the issues of misogyny and demagoguery in the hip-hop culture. In fact, in the song "Famous and Dandy (Like Amos 'N' Andy)," Disposable Heroes addresses many of the same issues in a stinging indictment of other rappers who have gained platinum record sales by fulfilling black stereotypes: a laudable message, but fairly useless when your target audience ignores it and white fans approve of it only for the sake of trendiness. •

**P.C. vs. English.**

# BACK TO BASIC

*By James Traub*

NEW YORK CITY

During the wine and cheese party at the Fourth National Basic Writing conference, held last fall at the University of Maryland, I struck up a conversation with a teacher from a New York community college. Earlier in the day I'd heard him gently demur when a speaker at one of the workshops likened required basic writing courses to "the experience of Africans under European colonization." I told him that I was surprised by the polemical tone of the conference. I had expected to be bored to death. Instead, I was horrified. "God," he exclaimed, "I thought *I* was the only one who felt that way!" But it turned out that many of the teachers and other participants were increasingly dismayed as one speaker after another rose to denounce remedial writing as an imperialist, colonialist, arrogant and generally racist endeavor.

I'd gone to the conference because I am writing a book about City College, where basic writing was created. When the colleges of the City University of New York lowered their admissions standards in 1970 to increase black and Hispanic enrollment, City College was overwhelmed by students who had never learned how to write a coherent paragraph, analyze a simple essay or read a book. The school asked Mina Shaughnessy, the director of a program for disadvantaged students in the college, to organize a remedial writing curriculum. Shaughnessy coined the term "basic writing," creating a program designed not only to abolish the stigma of remediation from the minds of students but also to convey her core tenet: "BW students write the way they do," she stated in her 1977 book, *Errors and Expectations*, "not because they are slow or non-verbal, indifferent to or incapable of academic excellence, but because they are beginners, and must, like all beginners, learn by making mistakes."

*Errors and Expectations* is a lucid and inspiring statement of the liberal creed and one of the most important documents to emerge from the debate over open college admissions. The book had an immense impact on the field because Shaughnessy provided a pedagogical foundation for the premise that dreadfully educated high school graduates could become successful college students.

Today the great majority of entering students at City College still take some combination of remedial math, reading and writing before advancing into the regular college curriculum. Many of these students drop out before emerging from the remedial depths; others barely cope with the demands of college courses. I went to the conference hoping to learn how well this idealistic campaign was faring. As it turned out, I was asking the wrong question.

The campaign itself, it turns out, is under sustained ideological assault. At a luncheon on the first day of the conference, the editors of *The Journal of Basic Writing* noted with distinct unease that this year's Mina Shaughnessy Award had gone to a scholar, Min-zhan Lu of Drake University, whose work directly challenged Shaughnessy's premises. That morning I had already heard Lu and another speaker, Pamela Gay of SUNY/Binghamton, circle cautiously around Shaughnessy's ghost (she died in 1980). "I think Mina Shaughnessy would agree," Gay said, that the underlying assumptions of basic writing are "imperialistic." Gay ridiculed the idea that the basic writing teacher could function as a "linguistic parent."

Gay and Lu were objecting to the language and the process of remedial instruction; other speakers attacked its end—that is, "good writing." The plenary session that closed the first day of the conference was devoted to the issue of standards. Tom Fox, who runs a writing program at Cal State University, Chico, mocked the concern for standards as a hobbyhorse of reactionaries. If he had to offer standards of his own—which he did, grudgingly—Fox suggested that good writing should "be



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relentlessly plural," "interrogate social and political inequities" and "oppose homophobia." Fox was followed by Jerrie Cobb Scott of Central State University of Ohio, who declared a need for "a non-biased definition of literacy" and accused conservatives of practicing "uncritical disconsciousness."

Fox, Scott and the others were laboring to overturn Shaughnessy's metaphor of the beginner; their basic writer was in fact a dissident, a militant like themselves. As another speaker, Steve Parks of the University of Pittsburgh, put it: "It is not *their* language that is subject to error and needs change. It is *our* approach" and our "subject position." Parks quoted Stokely Carmichael to the effect that blacks have "resisted" standard English as the language of the slavemasters.

The remedial teachers I know at City College would find that analogy absurd, and so would most of the students; they're not resisting the language, but struggling desperately to catch on. These are young men and women who, by and large, have made it through high school without ever having to read, think or write critically. Their experience had left them woefully ill-equipped for the demands of college. Many of them, it's true, are deeply disengaged from, or frightened of, school. But to politicize that attitude is facile; to romanticize it is dangerous.

This particular assault, like some of the other more extreme symptoms of the multicultural debate, may turn out to be a harmless fad. After all, the militants themselves are committed to the promise of using higher education to create a better life for the poor and the disadvantaged. And that promise cannot be made real unless basic writing works. No one that I know of at City College, and no one that I met at the conference, teaches this new polemic. Basic writing teachers are well aware of the deficits with which their students arrive; they take their obligations seriously. David Bartholomae, the head of the writing program at the University of Pittsburgh and the keynote speaker at the conference, says that he knows of no writing program that "encourages students to be oppositional."

Some of the radicals, it seemed, were uncomfortably, and even farcically, divided between their professional and ideological commitments. At one point an incendiary speaker named Bruce Horner was asked by a member of the audience whether he talked about relationships of dominance and control and so forth in his own classes. "No," said Horner, "I wouldn't use those terms particularly. I think to throw in those terms would itself be an exercise in domination."

JAMES TRAUB is writing a book about City College.

**Fujimori and the ruin of Peru.**

# THE UNSHINING PATH

*By Gustavo Gorriti*

When Alberto Fujimori, the son of impoverished Japanese immigrants, materialized from nowhere to win the 1990 Peruvian presidential elections, nobody knew how to interpret this political phenomenon except as the success of smallness. It was an almost poetical view of smallness: the craft shop defeating the assembly line, symbolized by his opponent, Mario Vargas Llosa, with his insistence on modernity, his ostentatiously wealthy entourage and his election consultants who spoke only English. Fujimori's appeal, in contrast, was a soothing one. Fujimori was hailed as "El Chinito" ("the little Chinese"), the smiling promise of betterment at low cost, the man who wouldn't make a sucker out of the people—as many believed Vargas Llosa's retinue would. The very nickname "El Chinito" brought Fujimori a paradoxical electoral bonus through historical revisionism: "*chino*" ("Chinese"), after all, had been the derogatory term by which Peruvians characterized all Asians in their difficult past in the country. But Fujimori became the political embodiment of that part of the Asian heritage that Peruvians had learned to trust and respect: he was the Chinese doctor, humbly expert in the ways of needles and herbs, who was visited when the expensive Western physician had diagnosed your illness to be terminal, or when he had caused too much pain.

And so Fujimori trounced Vargas Llosa at the polls. The sense of momentousness may be partially understood by imagining the networks announcing that Ross Perot had won the presidency. At Vargas Llosa's headquarters, wealthy sympathizers, mostly women, cried and asked for somebody to do something to prevent "el Chino" from becoming president. Ennobled in

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defeat, and speaking with an eloquence he hadn't quite found as a campaigner, Vargas Llosa denounced the racist slogans, asking his followers to abide by the rules of democracy and to support the new president.

When Fujimori launched his coup d'état less than two years later, on April 5, nobody was calling him "el Chino" anymore. Those who had once hurled racist insults now spoke highly of Fujimori (comparing him to de Gaulle, for instance), whose metamorphosis into a conservative authoritarian had impressed them. And many of Vargas Llosa's former supporters now criticized his withering denunciations of Fujimori. Those ostentatious people who, surrounding Vargas Llosa, had been a major cause of his defeat now found themselves in power after all.

"El Chinito," it turns out, never actually existed. It was an electoral mask Fujimori wore to lure the votes of the left, the Protestants, the scared, the center-left Apra Party. The real Fujimori appeared at his swearing-in ceremony as president: a shrill man, attacking right, left and center in a loud, nasal voice and incorrect Spanish. The attacks weren't well focused, or related to a clear program of social reform. It was demagoguery through aggression, but it worked.

A few days after taking office, Fujimori summarily fired the economic advisers who had shaped his economic policy. And soon thereafter he put into effect, with a vengeance, the very "shock therapy" plan that Vargas Llosa had proposed, and that Fujimori had denounced, during the campaign. For the poorer people, the shock's effects were multiplied by the clumsiness with which it was implemented. But as elsewhere in the world, stemming hyperinflation was accepted even by a number of those most sorely hurt by the shock therapy. And it brought him the support of the business class, which was delighted to see him outdoing what they had expected from Vargas Llosa. What's more, these policies, along with his willingness to pay the country's foreign debt, won the quick support of the international financial organizations.

This change coincided with other events. During the last stages of the campaign, Fujimori had been exposed as a systematic tax cheater in his real estate business. He had also been revealed as a protégé of former President Alan Garcia's populist regime, from which he had illegally received a farm under the guise of agrarian reform. He had largely managed to evade the subject as a candidate. However, some journalists were aware of intense under-the-table maneuvering (ordered by Garcia and carried out by his intelligence service), which eventually produced the sanitized paperwork Fujimori could refer to during the campaign. He never spoke about it after his election. Yet when people began to be purged from the state's bureaucracy without any other explanation than general attacks on alleged corruption, a rough new picture of Fujimori started emerge: one of an authoritarian bent on enhancing his power. Nevertheless, his new admirers were entranced. Lying was interpreted as statesmanship, and poker-faced authoritarianism as an expression of renowned Japanese discipline.

The Japanese metaphor worked well for him, even though it was inaccurate and brought no small anxiety to the 45,000 Peruvians of Japanese origin. Fujimori wouldn't have been a moral example in Yokohama or Kawaichi any more than he was in Lima. But certain aspects of his personality can be understood only in the context of the harsh history of the Japanese and Asian immigration to Peru. Peru has been called a country of "*todas las sangres*," of all the bloods. Few other countries in Latin America have the variety of immigrants and the racial mix Peru has. The origins of many immigrants, though, are unhappy. And the Japanese had more than their share of the suffering.

The first Japanese immigrants arrived in 1899, to work as rural laborers. They met a chauvinistic bias no Western immigrant faced. When Fujimori's parents immigrated to Peru from Japan in 1934, Depression-era discontent fed a generation-old resentment against the Japanese. Immigrants and their children, the nisei (second generation), found themselves harassed both by an increasingly restrictive government and by racist agitators. In 1940 anti-Japanese demonstrations in Lima turned into widespread rioting and looting of Japanese businesses. Ten Japanese were killed and property was destroyed. After Pearl Harbor, under some pressure from the United States, Peru agreed to extradite a number of immigrants to the United States to be interned in camps. Close to 1,800 Peruvian Japanese, 10 percent of their population at the time, were deported to the United States between 1942 and 1943. Widespread confiscation of property affected both them and some of those allowed to stay in Peru.

The postwar era changed Peruvian attitudes toward the Japanese. The quiet industriousness of the Japanese-Peruvians was admired, as more and more of them made their imprint on almost every aspect of Peruvian life. The feats of intelligent planning and hard work that led to Japan's economic prominence also added luster to the Japanese-Peruvian community. By the end of the '80s, polls showed Japan as the developed nation Peruvians admired most. Nevertheless, prewar and wartime anxiety permeated the Japanese-Peruvian community for a long time. Cautiousness, suspicion and a finely developed sense of the low profile coexisted with a community life where the sense of almost claustrophobic isolation bred its own strains of conflict and pettiness. Eventually they would be exemplified in Alberto Fujimori's personality.

Fujimori was still a boy at the time of the anti-Japanese riots. He grew up on the fringes of the Japanese community, as his family struggled to make ends meet. He went to public school, then studied agricultural engineering at La Molina national university. Supported by a Ford Foundation grant, he earned a master's degree in mathematics at the University of Wisconsin in the early '70s and returned to Peru to teach in the math department of La Molina.



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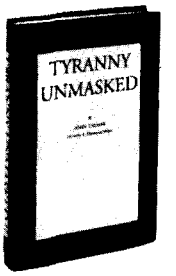


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In the late '70s the obscure professor suddenly emerged as a running mate to one of the candidates running for president of the university. Very few people knew him at the time, and he was soundly defeated. He went on to make a bid to become dean of the university, but was again defeated. Then, in 1984, as state-funded universities began to lose their best professionals following a decline in salaries and decades of neglect, he was elected a dean. Immediately afterward he was elected president of the university, supported by a coalition of the academic downtrodden—poorly paid incoming professors and administrative personnel and some leftist students.

In many respects, Fujimori's tenure at La Molina prefigured his actions as a politician. Surrounded by young mediocrities (some of whom would later play a role in his regime, such as current health minister Victor Paredes, and Andrés Reggiardo, Fujimori's political jack of all trades), he demanded unquestioning obedience. He appointed people to positions according to his strategies of power rather than the functional needs of the university. As a result, there was a further slump in academic standards. "The university was managed at the administrative, not the academic level," says a former colleague. "Not even one magazine was bought, lab equipment wasn't renovated, curricula remained static." A bitter feud ensued with the professors' association. Fujimori managed to force the president of the association to quit but was boycotted by the professors in reprisal. The university was in a deep crisis by the time he left in 1989.

In the meantime, however, he had already set his sights on political office. He heavily wooed Garcia's Apra Party. Even when Garcia's populist demagogy was swelling the ranks of the opposition, Fujimori continued his cooperation. As a reward the Apra government gave him a farm north of Lima. They also made him the anchor of a political talk show on the tightly controlled, state-run T.V. Channel 7.

As the 1990 national elections approached, Fujimori negotiated a position as a candidate for Senate in the Apra Party. He subsequently decided to set his sights even higher and ran as a presidential candidate as well, mainly to achieve greater name recognition for his Senate bid. (In Peru it is possible to run simultaneously for the Senate and the presidency.) He courted leaders of small industrialist associations and leading ministers of the Protestant denominations to join his list as candidates. They provided a network of grass-roots activists, which helped him to get close to the top of what were then called the "*pitufos*," the "midgets," those also-rans among the presidential candidates, whose support was measured between 0.5 percent and 4 percent in the polls.

As the date for the presidential election approached, Fujimori and another candidate, Ezequiel Ataucusi, chief of a sect known as "The Israelites of the New Universal Covenant," were struggling to lead the midget pack. Fujimori gained some advantage, and Garcia, who hated his own party's candidate and who was prevented by the constitution from running again, began to help him. Fujimori was noticed, and he began to surge. Garcia was unpopular, and the legal left was suffering the first consequences of the collapse of what was then called "real socialism." People looked for a different kind of rhetoric, for a glorified reflection of their own expectations of success: small, hands-on entrepreneurs, with a habit for the folksy expression and practical experience. Or T.V. personalities, with whom people developed an illusion of intimacy. In June 1990 Fujimori became president of Peru.

For most of Fujimori's first year the real executive power was exercised through two powerful informal advisers. One, Hernando De Soto, a cosmopolitan of suave manners who had collaborated in the past with Vargas Llosa and Garcia, and who had political connections in the United States, was in charge of important foreign relations: bilateral relations with the United States, especially concerning the international financial institutions, and later the drug war. By early 1992 his influence had faded. The other, Vladimiro Montesinos, a former captain cashiered out of the army in the '70s and legal strategist for Peruvian and Colombian drug-trafficking organizations in the '80s, was in charge of national security, which he maintained mainly by controlling the armed forces and the police through the intelligence services.

Montesinos had become indispensable to Fujimori during the campaign, when Fujimori's pattern of real estate tax fraud was exposed. As his candidacy seemed to be in danger of collapsing, the National Intelligence Service, acting under instructions from Garcia, came to the rescue. Transactions were sanitized and former clients of Fujimori's were either pressured or cajoled into silence. A thoroughly unscrupulous man, Montesinos conducted extensive purges first in the national police force, then in the armed forces, persuading Fujimori that he was taking care of Fujimori's enemies, who just happened to be his own. Then, once the armed forces were controlled, he tried to use them as a sort of ersatz, unquestioning political party for Fujimori. Montesinos provided Fujimori with the secret information emanating from wiretappings and intelligence reports on members of the opposition. Montesinos also established a close working relationship with the CIA. In late 1991 his national intelligence service created an anti-drug directorate, trained and funded by the agency. At the same time, he and the president were plotting ways to strengthen Fujimori's control and discredit the opposition.

There is little doubt that Fujimori and Montesinos agreed early on, perhaps even before Fujimori took office, to carry out a coup, abrogate the constitution, and put in place a dictatorial regime along largely fascist lines. Afterward, the *Peru Report*—a monthly whose reporting relies heavily on some sources who are close Montesinos associates in the national intelligence service—explained that the "coup structure" had been in place since 1990.

Outside the country, Fujimori was regarded as a great success. Last March he visited Japan. He had been there



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before, first as president-elect and then as president. But this trip was more triumphant homecoming than state visit. He stayed as a guest of Emperor Akihito at the imperial palace; Akihito told Fujimori to think of him as an older brother. The Japanese Diet welcomed him—an uncommon event even with leaders of powerful countries. At home, however, the democracy was crumbling. Political parties looked to him for signs of willingness to agree on a common ground. Desperate grass-roots organizations, daily losing leaders to the Shining Path assassins, looked to him for empathy and leadership. But he refused the challenge.

The coup came just as Fujimori's shadier dealings threatened to come to light. Parliament was investigating widespread wiretapping of members of the opposition, and on the night of November 3, 1991, there was an urban massacre in which a group of masked individuals armed with silencer-equipped submachine guns broke into a barbecue party in a poor neighborhood on downtown Lima's Huanta Street and killed fifteen people. The fact that one of the getaway trucks belonged to the Ministry of the Interior and the other to the presidential palace, plus information leaking from the intelligence services, pointed to an army intelligence hit squad. For far less grave charges, Brazil's President Fernando Collor was impeached a few months later in a crisis that might in the end strengthen Brazilian democracy.

ALBERTO FUJIMORI BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The Bush administration, which initially rejected the coup and forced Fujimori to agree on an election timetable to "restore" democracy, shifted soon afterward, saying that Fujimori was the only game in town and a guarantee of stability. (Translation: someone over whom the United States has influence.) That argument was initially bolstered last September by the unexpected arrest of Abimael Guzman, the leader of the Shining Path. But the capture was the work of a police unit created in the early '80s and upgraded in the late '80s. The unit chose to tell the press of the arrest rather than inform Fujimori himself (who was fishing in the Peruvian jungle at the time), no doubt suspecting that he would claim credit for the feat, as he eventually did, with some success.

But the coup attempt against Fujimori in Lima on November 13 by a group of army officers led by retired General Jaime Salinas, who tried to rid the army of Montesinos and restore constitutional rule to the country, shows that Fujimori is far from being the only game in town, much less a guarantee of stability. On the contrary, as a Mafia-type dictatorship attempts to root itself in power through intimidation, the increase in human rights violations is evident and persecution of the opposition is widespread. Further polarization seems unavoidable. Fujimori —who last month granted prompt asylum to fugitive Venezuela coupists—is a recipe for instability in Peru and South America.

The Clinton administration should strengthen the pressure on Fujimori, both through the Organization of American States, which up to now has been useless, and through bilateral channels. The Japanese should be gently but firmly prodded to cooperate. All cooperation with the dictatorship through international financial institutions should be stopped, while help to the people of Peru through non-governmental channels should be increased. These actions would have an immediate effect. Democratic forces would be encouraged, and the armed forces—already under strain, especially after several of the officers detained in the November 13 coup attempt were tortured, on the orders and with the participation of Montesinos—wouldn't feel like betting on the losing horse. And Fujimori, faced with the growing likelihood of being overthrown, would probably call for general elections, if for nothing else than as a way to negotiate an amnesty for him and his associates. The popular support he had at the beginning is already eroding. He is not a genius, but he is not an idiot either. He knows he cannot bluff if he holds no cards. •



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# BOOKS & The Arts

## *Stanley Kauffmann on Films*

### Of Human Bondage

We hear the *Lohengrin* prelude. Clearly an irony. The serenity of the music contrasts with the dreary landscape we see, surrounding a dreary Bucharest housing project. Then we're in a dreary bedroom with a young woman lying on a bed watching home movies on a T.V. screen. An inert man lies next to her.

The movies, too, contrast with the room. Everybody's laughing. It's a Christmas party with a Santa Claus and a small girl who aims a pistol at others who pretend to fall, one of them into a cake. Watching (perhaps the child was herself), the young woman glowers and smokes furiously. She moves around the crowded room, heats something on the stove in the tiny kitchen, then fills a hypodermic syringe with the substance. She turns the inert man on his stomach and bares his buttock to inject him. She realizes that he's dead. We learn, from her response, that he's her father.

Loud knocking at the door. A woman's voice, this woman's sister. The young woman orders her to leave, threatening to burn the place down otherwise. She lights some newspapers just inside the door. The knocking ceases.

All this, done in harried, anti-Hollywood, Middle European gritty style, is almost enough to make the exit light beckon. But a moment's patience takes us to a hospital where the young woman, whose name is Nela, is now trying to give her father's body to science and is going through a bitter black-comedy hassle in trying to do so. This, as we learn in only a few minutes more, is to be the pattern of the film: hard-pressed, near-hysterical drama alternating with a wild humor that the pressures seem to foster.

The year, we infer, is 1988, Ceausescu's next to last. The picture, made last year, is **The Oak** (MK2). The director and screenwriter, known in the United States for his theater work here, is Lucian Pintilie, a Romanian theater and film figure who had great difficulties under the dictator. It would diminish Ceausescu's cruelties to say that this film exacts revenge, but Pintilie's treatment of life under tyranny—frenetically morbid, fiercely funny—gleams and stabs. It brings vivid art to what has in the past so often been honest and painfully trite "revelation" of Communist life in Eastern Europe.

The film keeps surprising us because the characters keep secrets from us. Nela sees her father cremated, then takes his ashes with her as she leaves for an industrial town where, we learn, she has a teaching job. Up to this point, we hadn't even known she was a teacher. Arrived in that town, Nela is raped by a gang of hoodlums. She reports it to the police, is sent to a hospital and raises a ruckus there because of red tape (she is already well established as a troublesome woman), but she is no more emotionally troubled by the rape than if she had been in a minor traffic accident. It's as if rape is just one of the bad things that happen in this country at this time.

At the hospital she meets a young physician, Mitica, a man of compassionate whimsicality, at whose apartment she stays. (No intimacy between them.) We share her further adventures: her meeting with her specially bright students; her flight with Mitica to bury a deceased patient of his whose notebook the Securitate is after; their encounter with the armed forces who have surrounded a bus in which dissidents are holding children as hostages. The Securitate settles that matter brutally. But a counterpoint to this brutality is the farcical military exercise, with planes and tanks and paratroopers and shells and bombs, through which Nela and Mitica wander unhurt.

She wants to bury her father's ashes under an oak. Mitica knows of one. All ends at the oak, which symbolizes some hope for the idea of hope. They decide to have a child. They agree that if it is normal, they will strangle it. It's hard to see how they could have a normal child, as they mean the term.

Seeming improvisation, seeming haphazard progress—this is the tenor of the film; and after a while, its moment-by-moment increments appear the best way of dealing with the lives of two headstrong people who live by figuratively hopping from stone to stone across a torrent of bureaucratic inhumanity. Some of the quick-sketch jottings are superfluous: the inclusion of a mentally impaired child, Nela's sudden trip back to Bucharest to visit her mother. But such wide extremes as the moment of her father's cremation (almost a refuge from the world) and the fact that she puts his ashes in a Nescafe can (everything in life is a little ridiculous, even death) fit the schema of a picture that simultaneously grieves and laughs. This schema seems a scion of Andrzej Munk's *Eroica* (Poland, 1957), which made black comedy out of the Warsaw uprising

### FILMS WORTH SEEING

**Hoffa.** *An American morality tale—good works embroiled in corruption. The acting (Jack Nicholson as the labor leader), the directing (Danny DeVito, who also is in it) could hardly be bettered. (Reviewed 1/18/93)* **Intervista.** *Federico Fellini at the height of his genius, with little to say but saying it enchantingly. An interview with him is converted into bliss. (12/7/92)* **Malcolm X.** *Another imperfect but important bio pic. Spike Lee's directing, Denzel Washington's performance waver but win through. (12/21/92)* **The Muppet Christmas Carol.** *With Michael Caine. If Muppets and Caine aren't enough for you, don't go. Otherwise, there's fun to be had. (1/4&11/93)* **—SK**



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against the German occupation.

Pintilie derived his screenplay from a novel by Ion Baiesu and obviously wrote it for his own directing hand—with much hand-held-camera scurrying and with many faces frozen into stereotypes by dictated life. The exceptions are his two leads. Razvan Vasilescu, the Mitica, is an unhandsome, oblique actor who confronts both trouble and pleasure with a sideways smile and soon has us doing it with him. As for Maia Morgenstern, who is Nela, we're told that just before she made *The Oak* she played Medea. This is easy to believe. (I wish I'd seen her.) She is extraordinary, excellent. She has strength with loveliness, fire, a firm, wide-ranging voice; her supple body flows. Not in looks but in palette she is like Carmen Maura or Irene Papas. I hope we're going to see much more of her.

Madonna, an author who has a current best seller, has thought up a nifty book-promotion gimmick. She plays the leading role in a film called **Body of Evidence** (MGM), which is largely devoted to the subject of her book. The film has a plot of sorts. Madonna is accused of murder (the means of murder include copulation) but it's all just an excuse for showing, through an affair with her lawyer and the disclosure of details about her bed behavior with the deceased lover, her professional skill at amour—a sort of visiting nurse with gonads. And an interest in bondage.

The picture begins with a view of a lonely mansion at night in a thunderstorm. This old-fashioned hokum soon gives way to all the modern permissiveness—linguistic and lingual—that can be crammed into ninety-nine minutes. Her lawyer is Willem Dafoe, who, like Al Pacino, ought to avoid smiling. Those teeth. •

**How politics takes the education out of schooling.**

# *School Daze*

**BY ALAN WOLFE**

I.

Tocqueville once said that in America all political issues eventually become judicial ones. These days every political issue eventually faces a school board—or, more precisely, a school board in New York City. An entire period can be framed by debates in New York about the governance of its schools. It begins with Ocean Hill-Brownsville in 1968, when black parents, supported by the Ford Foundation and a number of political activists, crossed Albert Shanker's picket lines to open schools that had been closed by striking teachers. (They were protesting the firing of many of their numbers by a newly empowered local board.) Two very repercussive events of contemporary American politics can be traced to that confrontation: the widening split between blacks and Jews, and the support of liberal foundations for what would come to be called multiculturalism.

That period is ending now with another debate about school governance. I refer to the controversy between New York Schools Chancellor Joseph Fernandez and District 24 in Queens. For the first time in his three years as chancellor, Fernandez suspended a board and assumed its powers. At issue was a set of curricular materials that mandated that "classes should include references to lesbians and gays in all curricular areas," called for the treatment of "lesbians/gays as real people to be respected and appreciated" and instructed schools to begin such lessons in the first grade. Justifying his actions, Fernandez told *The New York Times* that "our schools are the single most important front in the battle against discrimination." Defending hers, the head of District 24, Mary A. Cummins, said, "I will not demean our legitimate minorities, such as blacks, Hispanics and Asians, by lumping them together with homosexuals in the curriculum."

Fernandez did not win his battle, but he may already have ensured that many Hispanics and Chinese, preferring education to ideological conflict, will be less likely to trust their children to urban public schools. And future generations may also come to wonder how it was that a bureaucracy incapable of doing almost anything could have responded so quickly, and with so much determination, to a controversial issue. For when the schools do plunge in, they fuel the paranoia of less than altruistic people such as Cummins.

The events that triggered these destructive changes were as much symbolic as real. Curricular guidelines tend to be ignored, whatever formal agreements are made. Opportunities for compromise were repeatedly dismissed by both sides. Although few can doubt that Cummins is a demagogue (her authoritarian style does not include consultation with the parents in her district), Fernandez clearly wanted a fight. The incident suggests that something in America's system of public education seems to insist that we destroy it. It is worth trying to figure out what the source of this death wish might be.

II.

In his recently published autobiography, Fernandez provides a clue. Although one would never know this from his behavior in District 24, Fernandez is a sympathetic character. His book shows exactly what public schools can, and should, do. Growing up in Harlem, Fernandez dropped out of school, did drugs and seemed determined to wind up one more victim of poverty and discrimination. His personal decline was reversed by two institutions that are only rarely appreciated by those who want to end poverty and discrimination: the Catholic Church and the U.S. Air Force. Respect and strong discipline saved his life, he believes; and so he is tough-minded, for example, on issues of school security. Graffiti and disorder drive him wild. He wants to educate inner-city kids, not to make them feel good. He thinks that the school year ought to be expanded well into the summer, and he supports national testing. In the world of professional education, Fernandez is as good as they come.

No one works his way up the urban school bureaucracies without becoming a master of the pragmatic maneuver. Fernandez has a pronounced taste for managerialism, which leads him to spend much of his bragging time on the issue of School Based Management—the notion of incorporating the views of those who use the schools in deciding how they should be run. Far more interesting are other stories that Fernandez tells: an account of how he was able to abolish "building tenure," the arcane New York City practice of making it impossible to shift a principal from one job to another; a treatise on why decentralization of the schools in New York resulted in corruption; and a remarkably frank account of his opinions about the board that is

ALAN WOLFE is the author most recently of *The Human Difference: Animals, Computers, and the Necessity of Social Science* (University of California Press).



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unlikely, after reading this book, ever to trust him again.

Why, then, if Fernandez began as an admirable kind of pragmatist, did he force a political confrontation in Queens? What explains how a man whose life was saved by the Catholic Church could be so determined to override the beliefs of workaday Catholics? No doubt some of the answers to such questions are known only to him. But an answer may also be found in the way he thinks about the boundary—or the lack of one—between education and the rest of society.

Fernandez knows that public schools have assumed functions well beyond education: "The frustrating part, the thing that kills you in inner-city schools, is the amount of time you have to spend doing things that aren't directly related to school." "We have overwhelmed our classrooms with sociological indoctrination," he laments. "The scholastic consequences have been disastrous." Education is a "mess" because society, unwilling to take on problems of poverty, teenage pregnancy, drug addiction and other ills directly, passes them on to the teachers. When schools are required to "run the gamut from safe driving to safe sex," it may be the case that "we expect too much" from them.

Faced with a situation in which schools are no longer teaching, we might expect educators to insist that they begin to teach once more. But this is what Fernandez does *not* insist. "I'm not saying our schools should retreat from these issues," he writes. If society demands it, the schools must respond. It is not Fernandez's job, as he sees it, to use his position as an advocate for learning. When the New York City Board of Education split down the middle on a plan to provide condoms to schoolchildren, Fernandez approached the issue as a policymaker, not an educator. "Somebody had to take a position of leadership" when so many children were dying of AIDS. "So why not the schools?" Fernandez is willing to consider anything that helps solve social problems. He wants higher standards, but he is willing to try gradeless schools. Integration is important to him, but he supports the notion of an all-black and all-male academy. He is for parental involvement but rejected the notion of a parental "opt out" clause for the condom availability plan.

It is because he sees himself as a problem-solver for society at large that Fernandez jumped into the fray in Queens. Fernandez, who has a habit of identifying the health of urban education with the success of his own career, cannot hide his sense that the country's largest school system is still too small for him. He is scarcely believable when he insists that his efforts to join the Cabinet, within months of becoming chancellor, were misunderstood. His ambitions are plainly national, and the road to power does not run through schools that have lost their power to educate. It runs, as it always has, through the state. By asking the schools to take on the functions of the state, Fernandez is pursuing a course that may be good for him, but whether it is good for public schools is another matter.

*Tales Out of School: Joseph Fernandez's Crusade to Rescue American Education*
by Joseph A. Fernandez, with John Underwood
(Little Brown, 336 pp., $24.95)

*Inside American Education: The Decline, the Deception, the Dogmas*
by Thomas Sowell
(Free Press, 368 pp., $24.95)

*Why Johnny Can't Tell Right from Wrong: Moral Illiteracy and the Case for Character Education*
by William K. Kilpatrick
(Simon and Schuster, 366 pp., $23)

*The School Home: Rethinking Schools for Changing Families*
by Jane Roland Martin
(Harvard University Press, 237 pp., $24.95)

*School's Out: The New Technology and the End of Education*
by Lewis J. Perelman
(William Morrow, 356 pp., $23)

*Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice*
by Howard Gardner
(Basic Books, 320 pp., $30)

*Making Schools Better: How Parents and Teachers Across the Country Are Taking Action—and How You Can Too*
by Larry Martz
(Times Books, 320 pp., $12 paper)

*Family Matters: Why Homeschooling Makes Sense*
by David Guterson
(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 245 pp., $22.95)

*What Johnny Shouldn't Read: Textbook Censorship in America*
by Joan DelFattore
(Yale University Press, 200 pp., $25)

It may seem obvious to some that schools ought to be used to combat the larger problems of society, but there are dangers. First, education and policy-making are not the same. Policy-making works best when a consensus already exists about the course that we ought to take. When such a consensus does not exist, as it clearly does not on issues involving sexuality, public policy cannot, and probably should not, try to do too much. Education, by contrast, does not presuppose a consensus; one of its purposes is to present ideas, not to represent them. When we mix these realms, we reverse the assumptions that make each of them work, assuming a consensus in the educational realm (where one should not exist) because we realize that no consensus exists in the policy realm (where one should). The baleful consequence is to ask too much of the schools and too little of the state.

Using the schools to teach about morality because families and churches no longer seem to do so causes similar problems. There are obvious reasons why, if families have failed, we expect schools to pick up the slack, but as long as schools do pick up the slack, there is no reason for families to do what they ought to. This is a vicious dilemma, one of the most serious we face, but it *is* a dilemma. Those who urge the schools to provide the sex education, the moral training and the general upbringing that was once provided by families and churches ought to realize that, even if they solve one problem, they create another. Schools are simultaneously too rigid to substitute for families and too fragile to substitute for government. They treat the intimate realm abstractly while responding to universal needs with particularism. Collapsing the boundary between school and family will damage both.

Finally, a reliance on schools for what other institutions more properly ought to do works to make all schools into inner-city schools. No one can doubt that the conditions of public schools in America's worst-off neighborhoods are scandalous. Those who witness daily what family disintegration, poverty and violence can do to small children can hardly be blamed for wanting the schools to do whatever they can to help. But public schools are public, and so there is always the temptation to apply a program that may help an inner-city school directly to schools in other neighborhoods that do not want them. The insistence that schools provide social work rather than education means that the young people who are helped are more than matched by others who are deprived of the teaching of basics that they need and want.

### III.

When schools become involved in social policy, politics cannot be far behind. Americans have a peculiar habit of fighting their political battles everywhere save in elections, and



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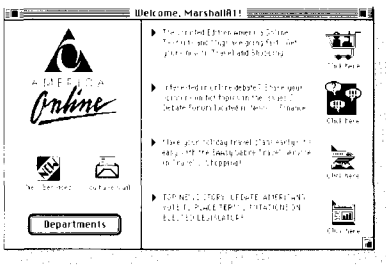


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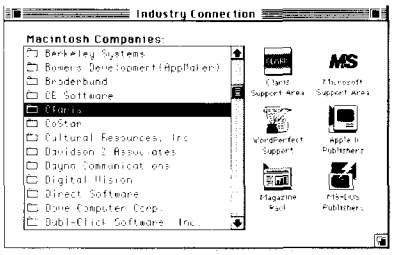


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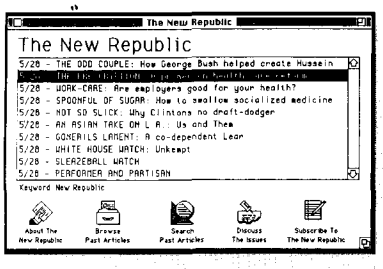


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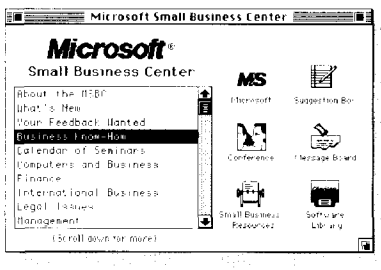


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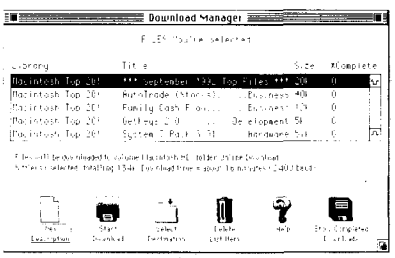


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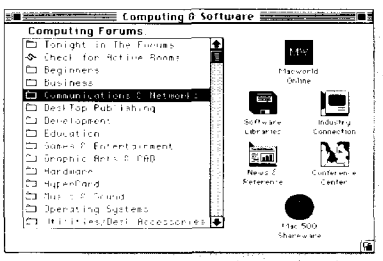


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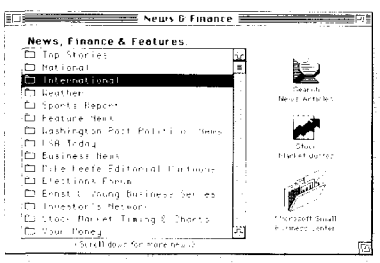


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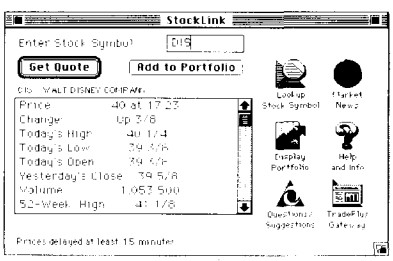


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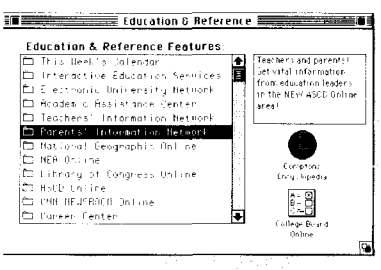


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they are now engaged in a political struggle over schooling that is as furious in its means as it is unresolvable in its ends.

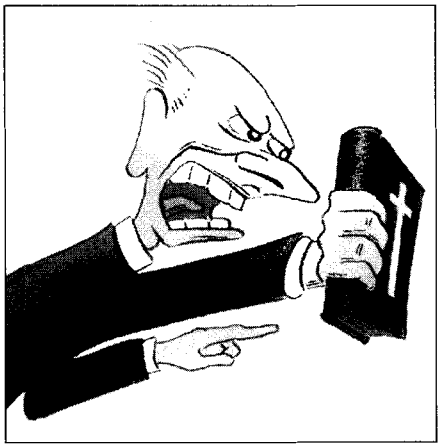
Thomas Sowell and William Kilpatrick present the conservative side of this battle with vividness and passion. Sowell sees decline and deception everywhere. He begins, as do most critics, with test scores. Between 1963 and 1990 the average combined SAT scores in this country declined by eighty points. Thirty percent of American 17-year-olds cannot find Great Britain on a map. Korean schoolchildren do nearly twice as well at abstract reasoning as their American counterparts. Insofar as such things can be quantified, American students, like their textbooks, have been "dumbed down." "It is not merely that Johnny can't read, or even that Johnny can't think," Sowell argues. "Johnny doesn't know what thinking is."

Johnny also feels good about it, and therein, according to Sowell, hangs a tale. Asked if they think they are good at math, Americans tend to answer yes when they are not, while Koreans answer no when they are. The reigning ideology in American education, Sowell insists, is therapeutic. All should be taught to appreciate themselves, even if they don't know a thing. Our schools have been captured by psycho-babbling products of a professional education establishment that does not distinguish a fact from a feeling. Educators are good at protecting their jobs, but at little else. They inflate grades so that unprepared children are simply advanced through the system. They fail to understand that self-respect is made, not given.

One of the more striking ways in which Sowell illustrates his charge deals with "death education." Some schools, it seems, ask students to write suicide notes, discuss death in their families, make coffins, imagine what it is like to be buried, and listen to funeral music. Rather than reading, say, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, students are taken to a morgue and asked to reflect on their feelings. Sowell concludes that our schools use their power over young minds to inculcate dubious (if not cultist) notions, rather than to teach how to think. The whole process works on the heart, not the mind. In the name of multiculturalism, bilingualism, sensitivity, relevance, the whole child and globalization, students are introduced to half-baked nostrums and ill-designed thought experiments. Right and wrong, true and false, good and bad: such categories all are dismissed out of hand. Anything that can displace learning will displace learning.

Kilpatrick, who teaches education at Boston College, treats sex and drugs roughly the way Sowell treats death. A revolution in sex education has taken place in this country, he asserts. A substantial part of his book is devoted to recounting the quite explicit ways in which some American schools discuss sex, such as graphic descriptions of the pleasures of gay sex and cunnilingus, of the advantages and disadvantages of Nonoxynol-9, and a brochure that compares fisting, rimming, vibrators, watersports and phone sex ("100 percent safe").

The schools, in Kilpatrick's view, are dominated by individuals who want to take romance out of love, undermine marriage and the family and promote pleasure without responsibility. Contemporary educators claim to be approaching sex "non-judgmentally," but in effect they are encouraging students to sleep around. They provide information, but they fail to encourage discretion. They say they are freeing students to be themselves, but they really want their students to be controlled by them. If charged with promoting a particular lifestyle, they would deny it, but they view abstinence as a false choice.



Kilpatrick's picture of how our schools teach about drugs is just as alarming. Under the influence of humanistic psychologists, schools try to avoid anything that smacks of distinguishing right from wrong. But what seems an interesting approach is actually quite dangerous. Parents are no match for drug therapists trained in the non-directive, esteem-enhancing methods of Carl Rogers. After all, parents spend a considerable amount of time saying no. To their children, they are familiar, even predictable, in their responses. Drug counselors, by contrast, are forgiving, charismatic, hip. They may be ostensibly warning against the use of drugs, but they are touched by the aura of the forbidden and the exotic. Kilpatrick concludes that drug education consistently increases drug use, just as, according to Sowell, death education increases death.

Kilpatrick's most serious charge is that our schools turn out "moral illiterates." They fail to teach character by ignoring the moral lessons so central to religion, myth, music and literature. Addicted to abstract moral dilemmas and value clarification, they undermine the virtues—honesty, heroism, loyalty—that a good society requires. To put them on the right track again, Kilpatrick offers a guide to great books for children—a rather sensible guide, actually, and certainly one worth having.

His book was written well before the Queens fiasco, but Kilpatrick seems to speak directly for Mary Cummins and the others who dislike the "secular humanism" so commonly taught in public schools. And Jane Roland Martin, who teaches philosophy at the University of Massachusetts–Boston, writes on behalf of all those professional educators who *would* use the schools to promote their own desired vision of social change. Martin argues that because families are changing, schools must as well. She imagines the creation of a "Schoolhome," or "a new kind of school" to which "youngsters of all ages, many of them dragging a parent along, have come to make sure their needs are met." The bulk of her book is a picture of what will take place inside this new institution. Gone would be competitiveness, mastery, conflict, anger, fear, discipline, brutality, selfishness and stereotyping—in short, reality, whatever one thinks of it. In their place would stand what Martin calls the three Cs of caring, concern and connectedness.

Martin is the kind of educator who would turn *Moby-Dick* into a parable to save the whales. She frowns on chess or cheerleading, is skeptical of photography and likes theater, farming and animal care. Every moment of the day presents an opportunity for didacticism: "I want litter in the halls and chaos in the lunchroom to be perceived by everyone as fruitful opportunities for moral education." All children in the Schoolhome will be given daily instruction in racism, sexism and gender, even if, to do so, blacks always speak only for blacks, women for women, immigrants for immigrants and so on. More advanced students would be asked to ponder whether Thoreau could not have channeled his ideas into more positive activities, like volunteering in an AIDS hospice. Science would be engaged in politics, especially environmental politics, since "modern science's distance and disinterest mask Western man's desire for mastery and control."

In principle, the idea of asking schools to assume functions once performed by



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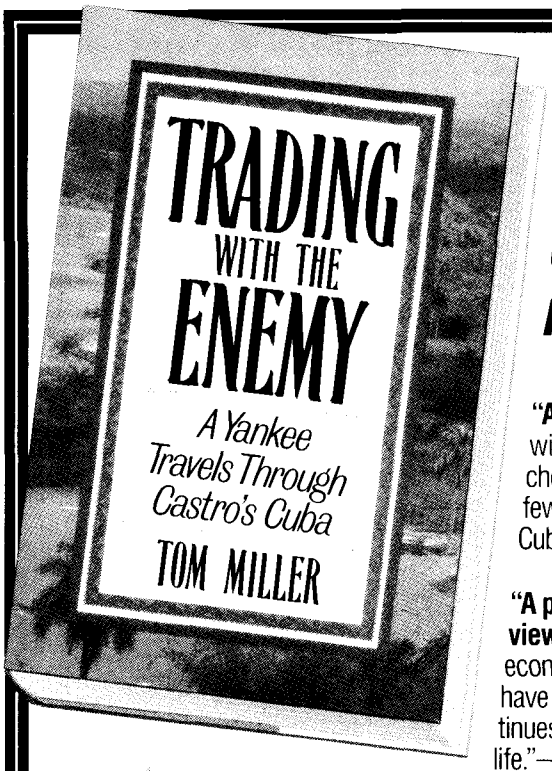
the family is not flawed; schools have been doing this since the nineteenth century. There are even occasions when we might want the schools to intervene somewhat heavy-handedly into the domestic realm, though the best reason for such intervention—the desire of recent immigrants to have their children learn a language and culture unfamiliar to them—is never mentioned by Martin. But helping parents raise their children is not Martin's only objective. She thinks that the Schoolhome "can remap the public world." Her book illustrates how some 1960s radicals, unable to win their agenda anywhere else, eye the schools as their last best hope.

Martin provides inadvertent but substantial support to the conservative case, but Sowell and Kilpatrick fail to take advantage of the opportunity that educators like her present. In part this is because both of them exaggerate their claims. Sowell views his antagonists not as misguided idealists, but as evil enemies: "We need to face the harsh reality of the kind of people we are dealing with, the kind of bitter fight we can expect from them if we try to disturb their turf and perks—and the bleak future for our children if we don't." He laces his account with quite false analogies between often naive educators and totalitarians, relying on words like "brainwashing," "cultural gauleiters," "Newspeak" and "storm trooper tactics."

Kilpatrick is also not always judicious. His chapter on drug education is organized around the experiences of Dr. William Coulson, once a figure in the human potential movement who has gone over to the other side. Unfortunately, Coulson is something of a kook; as Joan DelFattore relates in her book, he has testified as an expert witness in textbook censorship cases on behalf of fundamentalist parents, and argued against home economics textbooks on the grounds that they encourage students to choose their own careers. Parents, in Coulson's view, have been chosen by God to guide the fate of their children, and the only proper role for the schools is to teach students blind obedience to their parents' wishes.

For all their differences with reformers like Martin, conservative critics like Sowell and Kilpatrick agree with her that schools have vast power over children's minds. All three of these writers make the education of children a secondary goal: serving some larger political purpose comes first. Public schools will always be political institutions, for they are paid for by taxpayers and run by government. Moreover, we have certainly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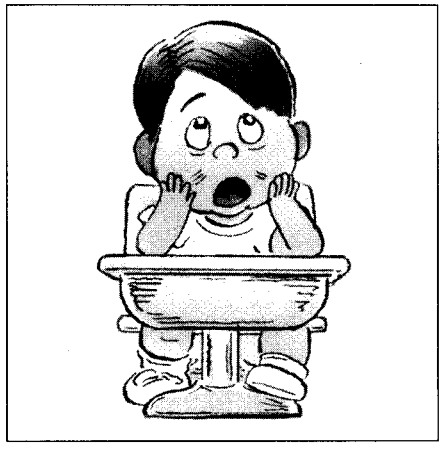
learned from our recent political wars that curricula must change as societies do. Yet those who believe that education and politics are the same thing misunderstand both. It is a huge step from the position that knowledge will always be contested to the position that there is no such thing as knowledge. When the schools take on so many functions other than the transmission of knowledge, they inevitably become battlegrounds in ideological wars, and all who fight in these wars have a panacea, not a well-thought-out solution to the educational crisis in America.

## IV.

Interestingly enough, the idea that schools should do something other than transmit knowledge is the latest wisdom among a wide variety of educational reformers. According to Lewis Perelman, for example, the human brain is remarkably inefficient as an information storage mechanism. Everything the average person might ever want to know—"all the books, manuals, magazine and newspaper articles, letters, memos, reports, greeting cards, notebooks, diaries, ledgers, bills, pamphlets, brochures, photographs, paintings, posters, movies, T.V. shows, videos, radio programs, audio records, concerts, lectures, phone calls, whatever"—will be stored in a device no bigger than a book within the lifetime of the very young among us. Because machines are intelligent, it is not important whether people are. No longer involved in the transmission of knowledge from one generation to another, schools should be thrown out. We will miss the whole expensive, space-intensive and cognitively backward thing as little as we now miss the horse and buggy. We don't have to worry about integration if there are no schools to integrate. The age-old difficulty of separating church and state will be solved by ignoring both. The tax revolt will disappear overnight. All you need is a modem.

Perelman is a "gee whiz" writer, fully within the tradition of those who offer futuristic, technological fixes to contemporary problems. Yet his ideas about interactive technology overlap with those of Howard Gardner, one of the country's most distinguished educational theorists. Gardner does not want to abolish the schools, he merely wants to get them out of the business of making judgments about who is smarter than whom. His most famous notion is the theory of multiple intelligences (M.I.). Those we generally view as smart possess logical-mathematical intelligence, he argues, but this is not the only way to be intelligent. At least six other forms of intelligence can be added to the usual one: linguistic, spatial, musical, bodily, interpersonal and intrapersonal.

There is a kind of pluralism that says that there should be many ways to reach a common goal. Gardner's pluralism stresses that there should be many ways to reach many goals. He seeks schools that are "intelligence-fair," that is, schools that do not discriminate against those whose intelligence is, say, intrapersonal in favor of those whose intelligence is mathematical or linguistic. If schools followed his ideas, "The notion of general brightness will disappear or become attenuated." Schools will try to assess the kind of intelligence each student possesses and to nurture it, rather than force all students to conform to a mode of intelligence that may be alien to their biological or neurological predispositions. Computers can help us here, in the manner of Perelman, by allowing students to proceed at their own pace. So



can apprenticeship programs or the imaginative use of children's museums.

In his latest book, a collection of essays and interviews, Gardner offers a clear synopsis of M.I. theory, responds to criticisms made of it and demonstrates how it has been applied in an entire school (the Key School in Indianapolis) as well as in special programs (Arts PROPEL). Two questions are posed by his book: Can M.I. theory work? Should M.I. theory work?

Like many school reformers going back to John Dewey, Gardner is simultaneously visionary and practical. At one point he writes that his ideas "might even be called utopian." Yet at another point he "unequivocally" rejects the notion "that individual-centered education is utopian." Which is it? His new book, in my opinion, resolves the tension once and for all. M.I. theory can certainly work. Given funds and dedication, at least some schools are quite capable of gaining some sense of the individual learning styles of their students and adjusting their curriculums accordingly.

But should schools move away from the idea that there is a "univocal" phenomenon called intelligence to which all students ought to aspire? Gardner's vision, no matter how democratic and inspiring, is insufficient to address the single greatest failing of our schools: their increasing inability to turn out students who can think rigorously and logically. There are indeed many kinds of intelligence, and they all ought to flourish. But in education as in life, not all intelligences are equal. M.I. theory has its limits, not because it is impractical, but because our schools, which are increasingly teaching less and doing other things more, will jump on any theory that lets them avoid the one kind of intelligence that insists there are some answers that are most definitely right and others that are most definitely wrong. Not everything in the world is so black and white, but enough is so that students who cannot tell the one from the other will always be intellectually handicapped.

The reason that we ought to be cautious before adopting new pedagogical theories is presented, inadvertently, in Larry Martz's account of "successful" schools. Martz examines twelve schools around the country in which teachers, parents or administrators have led small-scale efforts at educational reform. These case studies cut across racial, class, gender and geographic lines. Latino teenagers in San Antonio are used as student aides in elementary schools. A peer group system deals with addiction in Moorhead, Minnesota. Lawrence Kohlberg's emphasis on moral decision-making is applied in the South Bronx, while college preparation is stressed in inner-city Cleveland.

Martz's stories, however, are only tangentially about learning. Many of them deal with programs that could be carried out by agencies other than schools, such as day care or addiction centers. Others have, even by Martz's own account, uncertain futures. Some dubious (or at least hotly contested) notions lie behind others, including codependency rhetoric, non-judgmentalism and moral relativism. One of them in particular strikes me as troublesome. Martz praises the unorthodox organizing ability of a suburban Los Angeles teacher whose students are engaged in all kinds of exciting projects whose educational value is uncertain. An eighth-grade class, for example, organizes a stop and search party to see whether drivers are wearing their seat belts. What do students learn from this? "The kids have learned about buckling up, for openers," Martz writes.



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They have also, according to their teacher, learned what it means to "Make a Difference." They might have learned some algebra or history instead.

If Martz is describing schools that work, our educational crisis is real indeed, for what they are successful at doing only indirectly involves young people using their minds. One can only shudder at the thought of what goes on in schools that do not work. When Sowell writes that our schools are no longer academically oriented, he is, alas, right. The sad truth is that many educational theorists and practitioners seem to agree.

## V.

Schools that organize check points are going to be more fun than schools that teach algebra and history. Students will like them more, and perhaps some of their parents will as well. But should schools necessarily offer what people, especially parents, want? The common assumption on the part of many who offer cures for our educational crisis is that they should. As John E. Chubb and Terry Moe observed in *Politics, Markets, and American Schools*, "The fundamental point to be made about parents and students is not that they are politically weak, but that, even in a perfectly functioning democratic system, the public schools are *not meant* to be theirs to control and are literally *not supposed* to provide them with the kind of education they might want." Chubb and Moe's book has been recently subjected to scathing criticisms of its methodology, but it is remarkable how little attention has been given to the possibility that parents may not be in the best position to know what kind of education their children should receive.

No parents are more dedicated to the education of their children than those who remove them from the schools and teach them at home. Home schooling—the exact opposite of Martin's Schoolhome—is based on one of the few hard facts we have about education. First in 1966, and then many times since, James Coleman demonstrated that parental background was the single most important variable in explaining success in school. If education begins at home, David Guterson therefore asks, why not end it there as well? No one, after all, knows the individual child as well as the parent. Only parents have an interest in really hearing what their children are saying and carefully watching what they do. No wonder that children educated at home school score consistently higher on standardized tests. By now it is no longer news when a home-schooled child enters Harvard. If Gardner is right that there are many kinds of intelligence, home schooling makes sense, for those closest to the child may be in the best position to know the kind of intelligence their children possess.

Guterson presents his case with anything but a zealot's certainty. He does not think that home schooling is for everyone—he himself is a high school teacher. All he wants is a kind of local option. People who feel as he does should have more than the right to keep their children at home. Schools should make a place for them during part of the day, as they do in the Twin Ridges Elementary School District in North San Juan, California. After all, home schoolers are saving the taxpayers money. They are taking Tocquevillian principles of voluntarism seriously. They sacrifice at least one parent's income, usually the mother's. And they are in the mainstream of American tradition, or at least in the tradition that existed before we had common schools (and cities).

The overwhelming majority of home schoolers, by all accounts, are the children of deeply religious parents who do not trust the secular institutions of modern society. (A smaller number are offspring of cultural radicals who might once have considered "free schools.") The challenge such parents present is illustrated by the experience of those


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parents who, disturbed by the very same kinds of textbooks and practices condemned by Kilpatrick and Sowell, brought suit against their school districts in the name of their fundamentalist beliefs. These parents were upset by far more than sex, drugs and moral relativism. They challenged the portrayal of extraterrestrial creatures, the use of words such as "noble idea" and Anne Frank's advice to "just believe in something," on the grounds that exposure to such words would interfere with their children's free exercise of their religious beliefs.

In *What Johnny Shouldn't Read*, Joan DelFattore offers a comprehensive account of conservative efforts at textbook censorship. Her story is a classic case of what happens when parents treat their children as moral underlings. In the parents' view, as DelFattore summarizes it, "school officials were required to conform absolutely, without argument or explanation, to whatever parents wanted for their children." This is parental control run wild.

In DelFattore's story, the fundamentalist parents who objected so much to what their children were asked to read did not, at first, even consider home schooling. Nor were they interested in organizing their local communities through the political process to change what they did not like. Not for them the give and take of living in a pluralist society. These parents willingly encouraged the arrest of their own children to make a point. They believed it their duty to try to prevent school officials from carrying out their legal responsibilities. Yet the prospect of an education paid for by everyone else was difficult for them to forgo. At one point, these parents proposed a compromise in which they would come to school and teach their own children reading outside the class, a proposal that the principal rightly rejected out of hand. It is hard not to conclude that the parents wanted it both ways: the state should pay for the education of their children but should have no claims on those for whom it was paying. Only after their tactics failed did many of these parents remove their children from the public school and discover the virtues of home schooling.

It is clear from DelFattore's book that conservatives, who think that parents should trump the schools, are just as willing to politicize education as liberals, who want the schools to trump the parents. Her important and fascinating account ought to stand as a warning against the notion that parents necessarily know what is best for their own children. If we follow her story closely, we ought not to make home schooling an easily available option. Children can be captives of the religious and ideological beliefs of their parents and ought to have exposure to the claims of strangers. The state does have an interest in children, and the desires of the parents, which always have to be taken into account, can never be the final word, so long as we enjoy benefits that come from being members of a larger community. Limiting home schooling is like insisting on motorcycle helmets, one of the things we do to prevent people from harming themselves (and having others pay the costs) in the name of liberty.

Obviously home schooling does not resolve the question of whether parents ought to get what they want from the schools, for it represents an extreme position. For this reason, however, it also highlights an issue that can be easily overlooked. Fundamentalists and home schoolers see a direct connection between the schools and their political or religious beliefs. There is no tension in their view, no obstacle that stands between them and their desires. Yet tension is at the heart of education. Schools work best when they take what is and transform it into something else, a process that inevitably involves introducing children to ideas, concepts and methods that coexist uneasily with their instincts and desires.

Schooling, in sum, ought never to be "easy," yet it is remarkable how many current educational nostrums want to make it easier. Technology creates instant feedback, which returns to the student what he or she puts in. Multiple intelligence theory allows us to find the right kind of intelligence for any particular student's talents. Conservatives want schools to emphasize conservative themes to already conservative youngsters, while radicals and feminists assume that their views accord with the ideas students really have, if only they are exposed to them. Vouchers will enable parents to choose those schools that the parents most want to choose. Home schoolers want to protect their children so much that they are reluctant to expose them to the claims of strangers. Fundamentalist parents imagine schools as teaching revealed truth.

All these ideas, so radically different, have one thing in common: they imagine schools as places that work with what they are presented, rather than as places that want to transform what has been entrusted to them into something else. Perhaps the most important reason why politics and education are not the same is that democracy is appropriate for the one but not for the other. Schools that give people what they want are unlikely to be the kinds of places demanding enough to have much of an impact on the lives of students.

## VI.

Perhaps this excursion into contemporary educational theory and practice sheds light on why the controversy over District 24 in Queens became a powerful symbol of the changes taking place in American life. In the contempt that he showed for ordinary people and their moral beliefs, Joseph Fernandez embodied all those forces that seem anonymous, distant and judgmental. If this is what modernity requires of us, many Queens parents responded, no thanks, we would rather rely on nuns.

But the Queens parents also misunderstood education. Like so many others these days, they imagined the schools as little more than a conveyor belt for teaching the values that they already possess. Surely the schools have an obligation to convey ideas that make people uncomfortable by challenging their received wisdom. Populism is as bad for the schools as it is for the political system, if not worse.

Public education, in short, requires a delicate balance between maintaining popular support and confronting popular beliefs. If it leans too much in the former direction, it fails to educate. If it leans too much in the latter direction, it undermines its legitimacy, weakens its tax base and stimulates a growth industry in private schooling. The controversy in Queens represents the worst of both horns of the dilemma. As long as school officials and parents clash like this, the vicious cycle that has sent American schools hurtling toward self-destruction can only continue.

Even though schools in America's past routinely took children away from their parents and introduced them to alien ideas, they also had the support of those very parents. For all the turmoil of what Diane Ravitch has called "the great school wars," many parents struggled to put their children into the schools, rather than, as today, finding ingenious ways to take them out. Those parents knew that although the schools were to some degree social welfare agencies, they also taught something. Such parents had a contract with the system. Distrustful and fearful of alien authority, they nonetheless understood that access to a new language, history and culture, the learning of basic skills and the opportunities provided by the mastery of ideas were things beyond their ability to provide for their children. The contract was never founded on trust; it was



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founded on self-interest on all sides.

No such contract currently exists. Public schools not only fail to teach the ideas necessary to get ahead, they seem to want to substitute in their place questionable psychology and irreverent morality. Knowing a bad bargain when they see one, parents either take their children out of the schools or demand that the schools do what they want, both of which cripple the ability of the public schools to offer everyone the chance to develop his or her mind. Voucher schemes, new technologies and innovative cognitive theories may (or may not) help us, but they respond to symptoms, not causes. To make America's public schools work again, we have to convince parents to send their children to them. But they will never do that unless we ensure that the business of learning is the essence of what those schools do. •

# The Rest Is Silence

**By Richard Jenkyns**

## Last Words: Variations on a Theme in Cultural History by Karl S. Guthke

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Why are people so interested in the last words of the famous, the infamous and even the obscure? Perhaps the simplest explanation is the one offered by Joseph Addison and quoted by Karl Guthke in his perceptive, amusing and slightly inconsequential book. "There are no parts in history," the essayist observed, "which affect and please the reader in so sensible a manner" as the behavior of the eminent on their deathbeds. "The reason I take to be this, because there is no other single circumstance in the story of any person, which can possibly be the case of every one who reads it." We shall all die, we shall do it only once and it would be interesting, to say the least, to get some clue as to what the experience will be like.

But is dying like living, or will it be an experience of a different sort? The first surviving work of European literature, Homer's *Iliad*, is dominated by deaths, and the most significant of these within the action of the poem is the death of Hector. Hector has been shown throughout as a man who cannot see the future clearly, in contrast to his killer Achilles, but at the moment of death he acquires the power of prophecy. With perfect purity of vision he foretells that Paris and Apollo will slay Achilles by the city gate. In this picture the action of dying is radically unlike the other actions of life. "O, but they say the tongues of dying men / Enforce attention, like deep harmony," says Shakespeare's John of Gaunt upon his deathbed, in *Richard II*, adding, "Methinks I am a prophet new inspired."

Such episodes may seem to belong to the highly stylized world of high art, but we find similar sentiments expressed, in more naturalistic terms, in writers of the nineteenth century. Goethe regretted that Madame Roland on the scaffold had been denied the pen and paper for which she asked in order to record the very special thoughts that came to her at that supreme moment: "For at the end of life, ideas dawn on the composed mind, previously unthinkable ideas; they are like blessed spirits gloriously descending upon the peak of the past." And in *Moby-Dick* we are told that "whatever is truly wondrous and fearful in man, never yet was put into words or books. And the drawing near of Death, which alike levels all, alike impresses all with a last revelation, which only an author from the dead could adequately tell." Curiously enough, this instinct survives, secularized and jargonized, into the second half of the twentieth century: Guthke quotes the psychiatrist K. R. Eissler on the "possible stimulation of new structural processes through the terminal pathway." The graceless language fails to conceal the reassertion of an atavistic hope.

Such conceptions have had to coexist or to compete with another notion: that a man's dying words are the most typical of his sayings, that they reveal the truth about him. Tacitus portrays the emperor Tiberius preserving his power of dissimulation, the guiding principle of his life, to the end, when his physical strength has failed him. Pope's *Epistle to Cobham* illustrates "the ruling passion strong in death" in a set of ironic examples: the vain woman asking for rouge on the cheek and a shroud of chintz for her


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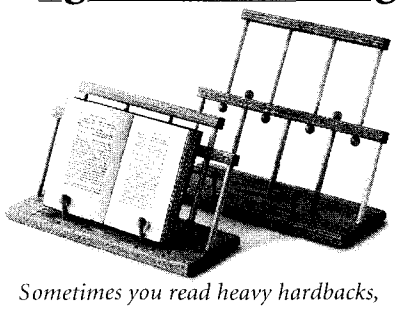

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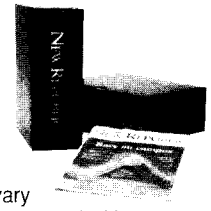

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corpse, the courtier still asking, "If—where I'm going—I could serve you, Sir?" Balzac has the miser Grandet, as his last act, reaching out to grasp the crucifix held up to him by the priest—not, as the pious would wish, in a gesture of penitence, but in adamantine lust for a precious object.

Many of the most famous last words are remembered or recorded because they are supposed to be characteristic of the speaker. Tolstoy asks, "But the peasants, how do peasants die?" Diderot states calmly, "The first step towards philosophy is incredulity." Rhodes's imperial dream and restless energy survive to the end: "So little done, so much to do!" Ibsen preserves a bleak Nordic crossgrainedness: the nurse observes that he seems a little better; he retorts, "On the contrary!" and expires. The wits take their curtain call with a joke, the best known perhaps being Heine's "*Dieu me pardonnera, c'est son métier*" ("God will forgive me, it's his profession"). Oscar Wilde remarks, "I am dying, as I have lived, beyond my means." Brendan Behan tells the nun attending him, "Thank you, Sister! May all your sons be bishops." Guthke knows of at least six different people who are alleged to have replied, on being asked to renounce the devil, "Is this a time for making enemies?"

Which raises another question. What chance have most of these last words of being genuine? Guthke devotes his third chapter, titled "Pork-pie or fatherland: authentic or *ben trovato*?," to this issue. Every German schoolchild knows that Goethe's last words were "*mehr Licht*," "more light." Almost every German schoolchild knows that these noble words, symbolic of the quenchless striving of this late son of the Enlightenment, misrepresent the great man's humdrum request for a shutter to be opened to let more daylight in. But this may not be true either. Another version has Goethe's last words directed to his son's wife: "Come, my little daughter, and give me your little paw."

Many famous people prove to have variant sets of last words attributed to them; some have several sets, Rabelais, Voltaire and Queen Victoria among them. One explanation may simply be that anything said in someone's last days or weeks gets remembered as a last word, especially since it flatters a visitor's vanity to suppose that he or she has been granted the final utterance. But one is bound to suspect that wishful thinking is at work, twisting, misremembering or inventing, so that last words may often tell us as much about the culture in which they are circulated as about the individuals who are supposed to have produced them. Sometimes one can see the process of fabrication at work, even when the last words are too dull not to have been authentic. Leonard Bernstein's last words, "What's this?," were cited by *Newsweek* as an example of his "investigating, questioning" mind. Guthke, surprisingly, considers this not implausible, but it is surely a weak attempt to make bricks without straw. What it does show is that an investigating, questioning mind is something that modern culture admires.

Perhaps a similar moral can be applied to the pork-pie that gives Guthke the title of his chapter. This refers to William Pitt the Younger, the British prime minister, who died in office. "Oh, my country! how I leave [*or* love] my country!" were his final words. Unless, that is, you prefer the alternative: "I think I could eat one of Bellamy's pork pies." There is a comparable doublet of attributions in the case of King George V. Officially his last words were "How is the Empire?" But a popular variant (purely invented, as far as one can see) imagines him having been told by his doctor that he was somewhat better and could look forward to another period of prolonged recuperation in the dull and respectable Sussex resort of Bognor. "Bugger Bognor!" said the sailor king, and spoke no more.

In this fiction we catch a modern equivalent of the jester beside the general at a Roman triumph. It may well be significant that the story is attached to that rarity of the twentieth century, a public death. The palace announced, "The King's life is drawing peacefully towards its close," and it has recently been revealed that his physician apparently used drugs to adjust the hour of his passing, so that it could be announced with appropriate dignity in the morning *Times* and not in the common evening papers. With such solemnities on the public stage, it is not surprising to hear a snigger from the gallery.

Modern taste prefers last words to be at least distinctive and at best piquant. Guthke shows that this has not always been the case. For the Catholic in the Middle Ages, and indeed later, a man's behavior in his last hours was not a matter of life and death: it was much more serious, since his eternal destiny hung upon it. Priests were furnished with *artes moriendi* or "arts of dying," guides to their ministry at the deathbed. The hope was that the dying man would end not cleverly or distinctively, but well. The most famous of all last words, as Guthke tells us, are those of Jesus, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," and those who have repeated them at death include Charlemagne, Columbus, Lady Jane Grey, Luther and Tasso. People prayed to be delivered from sudden death, so that they could die shriven and prepared for judgment.

Guthke detects the beginnings of a change in attitude during the Renaissance: Montaigne hoped to die while planting cabbages. In an interesting section, Guthke sees Shakespeare as questioning the rigidities of the *artes moriendi*. "The rest is silence," says Hamlet, denying with his last words that last words bring clarity or certainty. Desdemona, asked by Emilia who has killed her, dies with the words, "Nobody, I myself. Farewell! Commend me to my kind lord. O, farewell!" The lord to whom she commends herself is not God, it is her husband, and she dies with a falsehood on her lips, a fact upon which Othello seizes with a perverted orthodoxy: "She's like a liar gone to burning hell. 'Twas I that killed her." Emilia answers, "O, the more angel she." It may seem prosaic to say that Othello and Emilia are engaged in theological dispute, though in a sense it is true; the dramatic beauty is that the moral issue is made tauter and keener by the clash between act and intention. Othello leans upon the letter of the divine law, Emilia upon its spirit.

Othello's own last words are "Killing myself to die upon a kiss." Verdi's Otello dies similarly ("a kiss, another kiss"), echoing the love music from the first act, the composer thus achieving, paradoxically through fidelity to Shakespeare, a purely musical effect of supreme pathos. The opera that best brings together the personal and public aspects of death is also inspired, though much more distantly, by a literary masterpiece: Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. Dido's dying lament, itself an incomparable fusion of formality and feeling, is enclosed within two solemn choruses, one of moral reflection, one of mourning. It is in part this framing of the queen's last words, the rooting of an individual's suffering in a social and moral context, that takes us beyond pathos to pure tragedy and makes this death one of the greatest in all art.

For the most part, though, opera, which is full of deaths, is surprisingly little interested in examining the experience of dying itself. This most unrealistic of art forms often favors a kind of realism at such moments. Scarpia dies with inarticulate cries, Mimi with a monotone murmuring, Don Giovanni with a shout of "ah!" at the end of a trio shared with Leporello and the Commendatore. Even Wagner's heroes end with comparative brevity. His heroines are another matter,



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but the ends of Isolde and Brünnhilde are less deaths than transfigurations. His women do not, strictly speaking, die; they surge or subside into erotic ecstasy.

To find music's deepest penetration into the dying word, we must turn away from opera and back to Christian dying. The last words of Jesus discussed by Guthke occur in St. Luke's Gospel only. In the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, Jesus dies with a wordless cry, and in St. John's Gospel with the saying, "It is finished." The English translation may suggest first to the reader the idea of relief, the ending of an agony, while the German, "*Es ist vollbracht*," seems to lay more weight on the idea of completion or achievement. All these ideas—relief, fulfillment, triumph—are in the original Greek, which also has a special place among the utterances of the dying because it is literally a last word—a single word, four syllables only: *tetelestai*. Consonant with John's theology, Jesus seems almost in command of his own martyrdom. It is as much his action as his passion.

Bach surely understood this very well, using it in his St. John Passion to produce the most profound of all reflections upon a dying word. Jesus sings, "*Es ist vollbracht*," but before the Evangelist can complete the sentence with the statement of his death, time is suspended for a few minutes, and the alto soloist picks up the dying phrase, expanding it into a tragic meditation. But into the middle of this there bursts a passage of tremendous exultation: "Judah's hero conquers in might." Thus Bach is able to explore, by freezing time, the complexity of that simple last utterance. This is an area where music can perhaps go beyond what words can manage. The whole of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* is concerned with the act of dying, and the second part, about an hour long, is conceived as taking place in the nanosecond between the moment of death and the soul's judgment. To be sure, Elgar is setting Cardinal Newman's poem; but whereas when we read Newman, we seem to be getting a neat homily on Catholic doctrine, in listening to Elgar we seem to share the experience of passing through death, as across a threshold, from one form of life to another. Maybe music's indeterminacy is better suited than words to perform this illusion.

Guthke inquires whether there are fashions in dying, in different ages or countries. George Santayana suggested that the English were too emotionally repressed to rise even to this supreme occasion; their last words (he was sure) must be dull and decent, a mere echo of the commonplaces of daily conversation. Guthke himself is wisely skeptical about the possibility of finding patterns; it might be better to look for "the simultaneous presence of a number of possible attitudes in any era, corresponding to the social and intellectual particularities of the dying." Still, it seems a reasonable guess that most sympathies today lie with Montaigne: the best death is peaceful and immediate. That seems a little weak. A better spirit is the one expressed vulgarly in *Peter Pan*—"To die will be an awfully big adventure"—and wryly in the murmur heard from Henry James near the end: "So this is it: the distinguished thing." If we miss our dying, we miss one of the important experiences of life.

Our opportunities for last words may not be good, though; a great many of us will die half stupefied by the drugs that modern science has invented to relieve the pains that modern science has prolonged. At all events, we had better not rehearse our parting messages in advance, to judge from the story (apocryphal, it seems) attributed to Walt Whitman, who was alleged to have practiced noble sentiments for his deathbed, "only to die with the expression of a rather more elementary human need." But with Guthke to guide us, we should at least escape the quandary of the assassinated revolutionary Pancho Villa. He died beseeching a journalist, "Don't let it end like this. Tell them I said something."

RICHARD JENKYNS is the author most recently of *Dignity and Decadence: Victorian Art and the Classical Inheritance* (Harvard University Press).

# *The Pilgrim's Pleasure*

**BY WILFRID MELLERS**

## Gabriel Fauré: A Musical Life by Jean-Michel Nectoux

**(Cambridge University Press, 640 pp., $84.95)**

The cultural traditions of the French have tended to stability and consistency, though not the stifling kind; originality went hand in hand with, indeed it sought out, perdurability. That France in the late eighteenth century became a melting pot in which Europe's political revolutions were generated was not unconnected to the fact that aristocracy and autocracy had been so deeply entrenched. In painting and music, in poetry and prose, the revolutionaries of Paris, realists and romantics and symbolists and modernists, almost all dreamed dreams of classical order and grace.

If we think of Gabriel Fauré as the most representatively French composer, certainly of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, it is because his art, over a composing span of nearly sixty years, was singularly of a piece. Although he lived through political and cultural turmoil, including the musical revolutions associated with Wagner, Debussy, Stravinsky and Schoenberg, and though it would be extravagant to say that they left no mark on him, one could validly claim that he continued to follow his own path, which was also the path of France.

The Fauré family was of durable stock; its members figure in the parish registers of the Toulouse area as early as the thirteenth century. But the family story follows the opening up of French society that occurred after 1789, through the rise of the bourgeoisie and the encroachment of industrialism on an agrarian community, rather as recounted in the novels of Balzac. Fauré's immediate forebears were higher civil servants, mostly in the field of education. They also had connections with the Church, which affected Gabriel's education in that, having survived provincial primary schooling (in which piano and harmonium were regarded as "harmless diversions"), the boy was sent to the recently founded Niedermeyer school of religious music.

Since he was enrolled in 1854, at the tender age of 9, one assumes that he was destined for a career as a diocesan organist and choirmaster; but his training left its mark on his general musicianship, since the school had been established in a conscious attempt to counteract the bland secularity of contemporary French church music. The syrupy effusions of the fashionable Alfred Lefébure-Wély and his like were to be countered by a return to ancient modal traditions, to plainchant, prefer-



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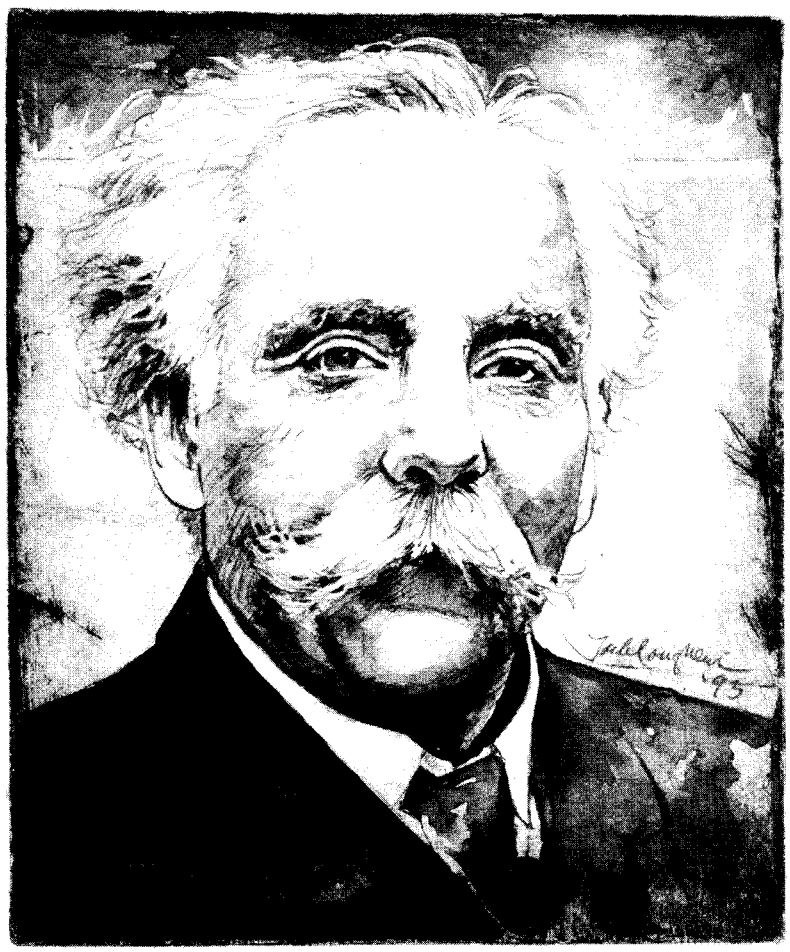
ably unaccompanied, and to the liturgical music of the French Renaissance. Fauré was also introduced to Bach, Mozart and Beethoven—formidable antidotes to French provincialism.

He flourished on this diet, but he was not creatively precocious. His first compositions, products of his late teens, were corny drawing-room *romances* rather than sophisticated *mélodies*, and his earliest ventures into church music were unventuresomely parochial in more than one sense. His first pieces for piano, his own instrument, were Mendelssohnian salon music, prettily turned but unmemorable. But Fauré's horizons broadened when Camille Saint-Saëns took over the senior piano classes at the school. Although Saint-Saëns was an archetypal French academic, already celebrated as an organist and a pedagogue, he was also a *petit seigneur*, a virtuoso pianist who had first played in public at the age of 5, and a prolifically successful composer in the fashionable genres. Superseding Niedermeyer as Fauré's mentor, Saint-Saëns salvaged him from provincialism.

Even so, leaving the school at the age of 20, the young Fauré had to work as a provincial organist and choirmaster to earn a living, and he drifted through a number of jobs. He was discreetly dismissed from St. Sauveur's in Rennes for sporting white tie and tails in the organ loft, which appears to have been in tune with his style of life. In adolescence and youth, Fauré was a typical *homme moyen sensuel*, indolent, charming, irresistible to women; Renaldo Hahn, that ornament of the salons, called him a "gregorianizing voluptuary." He made what amounted to an arranged marriage, for company and the procreation of children; once his offspring were born, he saw little of his understandably morose wife, preferring the favors of a fleeting flock of young lovers, mostly admiring pupils.

Fauré's pastoral idyll, if that's what it was, was briefly disrupted by military service in the Franco-Prussian War. He was deeply depressed by France's defeat and perhaps became wiser through disaffection. By 1871 he was permanently settled in Paris, having secured an appointment, through the offices of Saint-Saëns, at St. Sulpice. In 1877 he moved to the Madeleine, where Saint-Saëns had himself presided, and stayed there until 1896. Accepted as *maître de chapelle* at this prestigious church, Fauré entered society, consorting with fashionable and famous poets and painters, as well as composers. At the salon of the legendary Pauline Viardot, he played charades with Turgenev, Saint-Saëns, George Sand, Renan, Flaubert.



GABRIEL FAURÉ BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Debussy disapproved of Fauré's mindless socializing, as he thought it; but his worries were groundless. When Fauré began, early in his Parisian years, to produce music that was recognizably his own, he never compromised his artistic standards. Modern poets, congenial and sometimes personally known to him, triggered these first intimations of genius, such as the affecting Lydian-mode setting of Leconte de Lisle's "Lydia" (1871), and a number of Baudelaire songs. The *Cantique de Jean Racine*, a setting for chorus and organ of words from the supreme French classicist, makes a modest complement to the secular songs. Still, Fauré was 30 before he created piano music that is indubitably his, rather than salon music of charm and grace. He was also in his thirtieth year when he had his first irresistible success: a sonata for violin and piano in A, written in 1875, a decade before César Franck's famous sonata in the same key.

Fauré's approach to chamber music was molded by Saint-Saëns, as his approach to song had been conditioned by Gounod. What Fauré added to the recipe was an incandescence that burst the confines of drawing room or organ loft. In the sonata's first movement the violin soars and sings, the Chopinesque piano figurations surge and sizzle; and although the piece is basically in sonata form, it doesn't function in Beethovenian terms, or even in terms relatable to Schumann, whose romanticism Fauré relished. The technique has more in common with baroque Bach than with the Viennese or later German classics, since the lines are broadly sustained, the figuration consistent, the momentum founded on a powerful equilibrium between the violin melody and the piano's melodically defined bass; canonic dialogue frequently counteracts the waywardness endemic to development sections. So form becomes melodically evolutionary, rather than harmonically and tonally dramatic. Climax spontaneously happens, as the lines bound through chromatic and enharmonic transitions, rather than defined modulations from and to a home tonic. The exquisite slow movement, though a song, operates in the same linearly evolutionary way, while the scherzo bubbles in Saint-Saëns-like effervescence, tempering wit with *tendresse*. The finale reasserts the impetus of the first allegro and ends in white light appropriate to A major, traditionally a key of youth and of spring.

No wonder that this sonata was immediately recognized as a life-enhancer; and no wonder that it made it possible for Fauré to be somewhat less reliant on ecclesiastical and teaching appointments. He was more in tune with life as a



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professional composer, and his muse was blossoming. In 1880 he produced another winner, the First Piano Quartet in C minor, which extends the techniques of the violin sonata to nearly symphonic scope, as the three stringed instruments converse with one another and with the piano. The gravely elegiac first theme sounds like a *recherche du temps perdu*; yet the surging lines and the continuous figurations again make for a Bachian affirmation, in a "continuum" that is an eternal present. And again the scherzo starts in Saint-Saëns-like hedonism, while admitting to a wistful awareness of impermanence, especially in the childlike trio. The adagio's serene melody flowers over a gently rocking accompaniment; and the finale, though initially fierce in tonic C minor, resolves into a major that is spiritually and physically triumphal.

The vitality of this ostensibly conservative music was a sign of growth as well as grace. By the end of another five years, when Fauré had entered the middle span of his 40s, he had grown up emotionally as well as musically. The young lovers who had flittered through his 20s were superseded by passionate affairs with a few remarkable women, notably Emma Bardac, the vivacious and talented singer who later became Debussy's second wife, and Marguerite Hasselmans, a pianist who intelligently fostered Fauré's music as well as his creature comforts, despite the rivalry of the more famous pianist Marguerite Long.

During this phase Fauré composed the earliest of his songs to become indissolubly part of the repertory: the simple but appropriately mysterious "Le Secret"; the radiant "Nell," whose tune soars over a singing bass and tremulous broken chords; the proudly arching near-hit tune of "Apres un rêve," which proliferated in sundry instrumental arrangements. A climax to Fauré's song writing occurs in his settings of Verlaine, a poet introduced to him by Count Robert de Montesquiou, particularly in the climactic cycle *La Bonne Chanson*, written in 1894. This work, triggered by his passion for Bardac, is distinguished by a lyrical afflatus almost outrageously unbuttoned (for Fauré), yet qualified by increasingly plastic modality, and by what one might call harmonic evanescence. So firmly shaped are the melodic lines and so sturdy are the basses that they can accommodate in the inner parts a maximum of chromatic and enharmonic license. The textures are densely polyphonic, yet lucent. Audiences in the salons found this cycle thrilling but slightly shocking, and it still is. Fauré capped the same remarkable year with his briefly searing, uncharacteristically direct setting of Verlaine's "Prison," and soon afterward came "Clair de lune," that epitome of the spirit of Watteau and the commedia dell'arte, in which a modal melody floats canonically in a paradoxically vague lucidity.

On the evidence of these songs we might say that the strength of Fauré's music was inherent in his Bach-like characteristics: his firm structures, his long, serene melodies and basses, his unfailing (as though faith-inspired) rhythms, his quasi-preordained command of canon and counterpoint. All this reflects an ordered, if ideal rather than real, civilization. The charm of his music, on the other hand, lies in his apprehension of "Le Parfum Impérissable," to cite the title of another magical song of 1897: in a Mediterranean grace manifest in the delicacy of his elliptical transitions, recalling the modal polyphony of the seventeenth century as it gravitated toward the metrical, harmonic and tonal certitudes of the High Baroque. Melodies and basses tend to stability, while harmonies and textures are usually in flux; what makes the contradiction possible is the regularity of the metrical pulse, as potent as the turning earth.

While this applies to the songs, it is still more patent in the instrumental music of the "Bardac years," notably in the tremendous Sixth Nocturne for piano, also written in 1894, in Fauré's love-key of D-flat major, and dedicated to Emma. This music does not so much surrender the charm of the earlier piano pieces as transcend it, in passion and in ecstasy, releasing cornucopias of linear arabesque and harmonic luxuriance that are always subservient to securely structured melody and bass; Fauré's recurrent cry to his pianist-mistress Marguerite Hasselmans was, "Let us hear the bass!" Even his most romantically emotive music has a vein of toughness: as is evident also in the contemporary Fifth Barcarolle, in which the piano writing has the hard virility of Chabrier, whom Fauré knew and admired.

But the work that epitomizes Fauré's "middle" phase is the biggest, the Second Piano Quartet in G minor, written some years earlier, in 1887. Sketches were made for it not long after the First Piano Quartet, and like that crucial work it opens with an allegro irresistible in its momentum, but far more complex in its juxtaposition of contrarious modes of feeling. Fauré said that the ferocious first theme sprang from recollections of an iron works at Montgauzay, a formidable industrial image that had haunted his childhood. More benign (and more rural) childhood memories surface in the adagio's pealing bells, which, in a later letter to his wife, Fauré associated with Nature's overtone series, and with a yearning for "things that do not perhaps exist," though they give aural substance to our dreams. This adagio, magical in its use of solo viola, has always been acknowledged not only as a peak in Fauré's chamber music, but also in the chamber music of the nineteenth century. Its sublimity justified the composer's juxtaposing it with a scherzo that, if jokey, also contains sinister and un-Saint-Saëns-like undertones, and offers no alleviating trio. The furious *moto perpetuo* of the finale likewise overrides any association of Fauré's music with gentility; this is not music for the craven, though the final blaze of G major vindicates the human spirit.

In the wake of such powerful (but never exhibitionistic) affirmations, Fauré spread his wings. In the year in which he composed the Second Piano Quartet he wrote the Requiem that has become his most frequently performed and best-loved work. Here Gounodesque grace has become an idiom of Bachian nobility, though of much slighter range. Significantly, the piece started as "functional" music, scored in chamber style for parish church use. Given its popularity, we now usually hear it with a full symphony orchestra, though Fauré farmed out some of the scoring to his pupils. Even in its orchestral form, however, the Requiem remains intimately devotional—in the bell-clear repose of the "Te decet"; the graciously molded but evanescently harmonized "Hostias et preces"; the almost Josquin-like ethereality of the Amen to the Offertory; the vernal modality of the "Pie Jesu" (originally designed for a boy treble); the noble yet paradoxically anxious line of the "Tremens factus," with its gently grim, syncopated pizzicati.

Nadia Boulanger, a fervent advocate of the Requiem, maintained that "no disquiet or agitation disturbs its pro-

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## *From Assisi*

for J. O.

1.
Candles at Vespers,
and blazing torches;
booms; lulls; whispers;
alternating bells;
far and near churches.

2.
Like a rose window,
the round moon rose
above the basilica.
What face did she show
to him, in Africa?

3.
Medieval, but urban—
archways and alleys
plastered with comets;
the straw magi's
fluttering turbans.

4.
Awakened, lovesick,
to tribal drumming
in my Umbrian attic.
Clear synchronicity—
and then more static.

5.
A bevelled mirror,
a vanity for a desk;
books halving the bed;
fog, dawn and dusk;
figs, oranges, bread.

6.
An unfinished Flight
in a hillside chapel,
hidden from sunlight
behind a bare altar,
near Eve and her apple.

7.
Following sheeptracks,
taking turns at the helm
of Melina's carriage,
talking of home,
art, poetry, marriage.

8.
Doves flocking for seed
flung from a satchel
every day at noon
beside Minerva's Temple
in the Piazza Commune.

9.
Studying frescoes
of Francis preaching
to the attentive birds;
casting the I Ching,
weighing its words.

10.
Squeaking bicycles,
housemaids' quarrels,
wheelbarrows, a rooster,
sheep and church bells,
heard from my cloister.

**Carol Moldaw**

found meditation, no doubt tarnishes its unassailable faith." Fauré himself claimed only that the work expressed what he felt about death, which, after life's fretful fever, would at least bring peace. Many years later, not long before his own death, he wrote to his wife that "the best that man can be offered is oblivion, the Hindu nirvana, the Roman Catholic Requiem aeternum": so it would seem that he was a "Christian agnostic," rather like Vaughan Williams, and perhaps like his exact contemporary Elgar, whose art also sprang from tension between spiritual aspiration and a materialistic, industrialized empire. This may be why the Requiem has exerted so potent a spell. The music sheds balm, even on those who, like Fauré, do not claim to "know."

French musical tradition had always been associated not only with the Church, but still more with the theater, from the monarch-celebrating court ballet of the seventeenth century, through the heroic operas of Lully and Rameau, to the aristocratic-populist, romanticized classicism of Berlioz, to the more lurid melodrama of Gounod and Saint-Saëns. Fauré had toyed with theatrical projects, without sufficient conviction to undermine his dedication to absolute instrumental music and to intimate song. A breakthrough occurred in 1896—indirectly attributable to the prosperity of the wine-producing areas of central France, where an affluent landowner with the resonant name of Fernard Castelbon de Beauxhostes launched a wine-celebrating festival at Béziers. Greek or quasi-Greek drama was to be ritually performed in the open air, with "a cast of thousands"—actors, dancers, mimes, operatic soloists and a vast chorus and orchestra, stereophonically deployed over wide spaces. Fauré, always at home with Hellenism, welcomed this opportunity to emerge from his private salon-identity into the public world.

For this occasion he created grand, not grandiose, music on the legend of Prometheus, a hero who significantly harnessed spiritual power to material power, by way of the gift of fire. His music was direct in appeal and relatively simple in its demands, though not all its performers proved equal to it. Even so, the spectacular piece, when it was at last produced in 1900, was a huge success, and the name of Fauré, a musician's musician, became momentarily a household word. The extravagant forces involved militated against other performances, though Fauré made, or caused to be made, a version for normal orchestra. More importantly, the confidence that he acquired in his ability to handle "public" music on a large scale strengthened his resolve to embark on a grand opera, also on a Greek theme: the heroically questing Ulysses and his no less heroic Penelope.

Fauré's opera falls into the tradition of the *tragédie lyrique* of Rameau and Gluck, but it is also "continuous" in the Wagnerian way, since its drama is now interiorized. Whereas Wagner is always yearning onward and upward, toward redemption and resolution, Fauré's chromatic harmony vacillates, sensitively shifting, as though probing possibilities and alternatives within the psyche. The central character is not a man who acts, but a woman who waits, and whose heroism lies in her sensitivity to the heart's truth, as against the pretentions of the suitors. This is why she triumphs over the "shroud," the web of destiny in which she is embroiled; and it is why the feminist *Pénélope* was recognized by the discerning as a genuinely grand opera, albeit light years away from routinely French grand opera.

That it still has not entered the repertory is due neither to musical nor theatrical shortcomings, but to a series of frustrations caused by libretto problems, fractious entrepreneurs and Fauré's own inability to find time for uninterrupted work on his score. As a consequence, *Pénélope* was nearly seven years in gestation; and revivals were balked by the duration of the world war. But its day will surely come, and now that the title role has been superbly sung by Jessye Norman, perhaps its day has come. It is odd to think that this fastidious elegy on Europe was produced in 1913, the same year as Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, that cataclysmic celebration of the death of Europe.

Fauré's growing fame as a composer was reflected in his official standing. In 1905 he was appointed, not without opposition, to the plum position of director of the Paris Conservatoire, where he took his academic role as seriously as his artistic career. The reforms that he promoted in this moribund institution called for moral fiber as well as tact. Perhaps unexpectedly, the intensely private Fauré provided both. He insisted that harmony be taught indivisibly from counterpoint, and that young French musicians must be familiar not only with the accredited European classics, but also with the composers of France's past who had molded his own evolution, such as Jannequin, Josquin, Rameau and Louis and François Couperin. He may also have been among the first to recognize that Monteverdi was not only "historically"



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significant, but one of the supreme European masters.

Interestingly enough, it was during Fauré's conservatory years that his art moved, irresistibly if almost imperceptibly, toward modernity, until his re-creative conservatism became a paradoxical avant-gardism. As usual, this was first evident in his songs. The cycle *La Chanson d'Eve* (1906), to poems by Charles van Lerbergh, began a process of purgation, whereby the speech rhythms of the vocal line were directly affiliated to plainchant intonation, and the piano textures relinquished the sensuous density of *La Bonne Chanson* in favor of a luminous concordance and figurations that, though still "faithfully" consistent, grew increasingly exiguous.

In chamber music the two piano quintets stand among Fauré's supreme masterpieces. The first, in D minor, begun just after the Second Piano Quartet in the annus mirabilis of 1887, was in gestation for even longer than Fauré's patient Penelope, achieving its first performance in 1906. The second quintet, in C minor, belongs to Fauré's last phase, appearing in 1921. It has an inner verve that proves overwhelming; despite its subtlety, the piece had a "prodigious" success, establishing Fauré as a modernist *malgré lui*. The techniques, seemingly still reliant on traditional counterpoint and on rudimentary scales and arpeggios, are so metamorphosed by whole-tone progressions, chromatics and enharmonics that they have the power to refresh jaded minds and senses. This music is not only postwar, it is prematurely postmodern.

The works of Fauré's final years achieve synthesis between his modes of elegant austerity and tenuous strength. In a song such as "Inscription sur le sable" (from *Le Jardin Clos*, 1914) one misses, of course, the unforgettable melodiousness that graced the famous songs of earlier years, but one is spellbound by the music's rapt concentration, by the identity between its words and its music. Occasionally, as in the sublime apostrophe to the moon, "Diana, Séléné," from *L'Horizon Chimérique* (1921), one also has the bonus of a marvelous melody. But in all these late songs Fauré is an alchemist who makes gold by the simplest technical means: a single, slowly shifting interval, a small change of gear in rhythm, a minuscule modal alteration. In the instrumental works, ardor and reticence, sensuality and intellect, tormented energy and philosophical calm are ever more inextricably linked.

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# Those "West Bank" Settlements
## Are they *really* the "greatest obstacle to peace"?

Not too long ago, then Secretary of State James Baker made the astonishing comment that Israeli settlements in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") were the greatest obstacle to peace in the Middle East. This claim is constantly being repeated; many have come to accept it as truth. Could Mr. Baker possibly be right? It's a serious accusation and it deserves examination.

### What are the facts?

**A recap of history.** Some thumbnail history may be in order. Large numbers of Jews have been living in these territories since biblical times. Most of the Arabs living there are in fact relative newcomers. "Palestine" is the entire area now covered by Israel, including Judea/Samaria (the so-called "West Bank") *and* what is now the Kingdom of Jordan. It originally also included the Golan Heights, which later, in an agreement between England and France, were ceded to France, and to Syria as the successor in possession. In 1922, contrary to the Mandate of the League of Nations, the British severed the entire area east of the Jordan and gave it to the Hashemite Arabs for their assistance in World War I. Thus, fully 75% of Palestine, all of which under the Mandate and under the terms of the Balfour Declaration was meant to be a homeland for the Jewish people, was lost for that purpose. Only the area west of the Jordan was left for Jewish settlement.

"Why should the Arab countries and the 'West Bank' be the only places in the world where Jews are not allowed to live?"

**How the West Bank became "Arab country".** In 1947, after decades of strife between Arabs and Jews, the British decided to relinquish the Mandate. The UN stepped in and proposed a partition plan under which the country (west of the River) was to be divided into respective Arab and Jewish areas. Jerusalem was to be internationalized. The Jews accepted the plan; the Arabs refused it out of hand. In 1948, on the twice truncated territory allotted to them by the U.N., the Jews declared their independence, and the state of Israel was born. On the same day, six Arab armies invaded the new-born state. In what can be described as an almost biblical miracle, the Jews defeated them. When an armistice was finally secured, however, TransJordan remained in possession of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and the eastern part of Jerusalem; Egypt remained in possession of the Gaza Strip. TransJordan then renamed itself Jordan.

**The Six-Day War.** Once in possession of the "West Bank" and East Jerusalem, the Jordanians promptly proceeded to expel all Jews and systematically to desecrate and to destroy most Jewish sacred places, cemeteries and houses of worship. No Jews, regardless of citizenship were allowed into the "West Bank" or East Jerusalem, the locale of the Western Wall, the holiest site in Judaism. In 1967, Egyptian president Abdel Nasser joined by the same array of Arab armies that had unsuccessfully tried to destroy Israel at its birth in 1948, launched another war against Israel "to drive the Jews into the sea" and into oblivion, once and for all. But the Israelis utterly defeated the combined Arab might in the 6-Day War, one of the greatest military victories in history. When the dust of war settled, the Israelis had not only retained their national territory, but had repossessed the territories of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"), the eastern part of Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and had occupied the vast Sinai Peninsula.

It is clear from this abbreviated history that the Israeli claim to the "West Bank" is far stronger than that of the Arabs. About 100,000 Jews now live there. And why shouldn't they? Why should the Arab countries and the "West Bank" be the only places in the whole wide world where Jews are not allowed to live? How can 100,000 Jews living among 700,000 Arabs be the "greatest threat to peace"? How can our government be concerned about a new settlement of a few mobile homes on some barren Judean hills as the "greatest threat to peace", when we seem to be oblivious and totally unconcerned about the unrelenting hostility of the Arab countries, the de facto incorporation of Lebanon by Syria, the Scuds and chemical weapons still remaining in Iraq, and the relentless and ominous build-up of Syria's missile forces?

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violin and piano sonata, there appeared a second, in which the Bachian textures sing and dance in three real parts, one for violin, two for the keyboard player's two hands. The key is Fauré's (and Bach's) purgatorial E minor, modally altered; and although the lines are rhythmically more elusive and melodically spikier than those of the first sonata, they are more precise in polyphonic, especially canonic, organization. The andante—an aria airily floating in stepwise, syncopated movement—is perhaps Fauré's most profoundly Bachian movement. Its vernal A major blossoms, in the finale, into blissful E major, in perennially youthful, fountain-like vivacity.

Unsurprisingly, Fauré's late works came to be accepted as a *renouvellement*, along with the new music of Stravinsky, Bartók, Janáček and even Schoenberg. The high point of Fauré's modernity marked the peak of his professional and social acclaim, which could have happened only in France. In his last years Fauré's hearing, which had troubled him from middle life, further deteriorated; he could cope with middle registers, especially those of the human voice, but the top and the bottom of his tonal spectrum were, in his words, "a painful racket." It has inevitably been hazarded that the tensity of Fauré's late style may be a consequence of his inability to hear. Since he said that his inner ear was, like Beethoven's, unimpaired, this seems improbable; unlike Wagner and Stravinsky, those polar opposites, Fauré never composed at a keyboard.

Still, it is possible that the restricted range, the mirrorlike immobility and the disembodied boogie rhythm of the incomparable "Danseuse" (from *Mirages*) were conditioned by the "interiorization" of his muse. There is a similarly cloistered quality in the toughly knit lines and elusive harmonic nuances of the eleventh Nocturne, in the traditionally "painful" key of F-sharp minor; while in the fluttering harmonies of the thirteenth Barcarolle there is even a suggestion of the tremulous and phantasmal, a phenomenon unexpected in a music habitually so effulgent. But a "cloistered" condition need not imply limitation. The thirteenth Nocturne opens in glassy four-part writing in a modalized and chromaticized B minor, for Bach a key of suffering and for Beethoven "a black key." The music flowers, however, into a large-scale tripartite structure, making this wondrous piece a wintry complement to the golden summer of the Sixth Nocturne.

Fauré's very last work, composed in 1924, during the final weeks of his life, was a "pure" string quartet: a medium that Fauré, in awe of Beethoven, had previously evaded. This music, again in purgatorial E minor, is crepuscular in its unbroken polyphony, though the finale once more ends in E major, astonishingly affirmative from a man so old and, by his own admission, so physically exhausted. The quartet's concentrated part-writing is infinitely remote from the lavendered fin de siècle languors amid which Fauré had begun. The music has the gloss of autumnal fruit, which is understandable not least because these works appeared at precisely the time that French civilization, and Fauré's idealization of it, had been grievously threatened. There is an interesting correspondence between Fauré's late music and the poetry of another great conservative, Paul Valéry. "Density" and "interior potency" are terms appropriate to the shifting undertones of metaphor and rhythm in Valéry's *Cimetière Marin*, as well as to the undulating lines and bittersweet harmonies of Fauré's late music. Both men were artists of civilization and guardians of tradition; both were elegiasts, who at the same time celebrated a "*premier matin du monde.*"

As we read this fine biography by Jean-Michel Nectoux—which interlaces an account of the fairly quiet tenor of Fauré's life with perceptive disquisitions on each genre of his work, placed at the chronological point when he was most preoccupied with it—we may feel that Fauré's world and art are too far removed from us to be fully credible. By the end of the book, which persuades us to listen again to Fauré's music, we realize that time need never be *perdu*, since the function of art is to freeze moments of truth; or if not of truth, then of hope and regret. In a memorable phrase Nectoux describes Fauré's music as compound of "fantasy and rigor." The same might be said of his book, which combines rigorous research with an imaginative empathy with his subject's mind and muse. We must be grateful for it, as we must be grateful for Fauré's own renewingly durable music. He was a *rara avis* who lived up to his own ennobling precept:

> L'artiste doit aimer la vie et nous montrer
> qu'elle est belle.
> Sans lui, nous en douterions.

WILFRID MELLERS is the author most recently of *The Music of Percy Granger* in Oxford University Press's Studies of Composers series. His book on Poulenc will appear in the same series this fall.



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Contrary to stereotypes, this religious renaissance does not imply a retreat from working for peace, justice, and human dignity; nor does it signify a hostility to science, only an appreciation of the limits of science and technology.

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# NEW YORK DIARIST

## Not so dizzy

WHEN HE DIED RECENTLY AT 75, Dizzy Gillespie wasn't in the middle of anything that had the jazz world hanging from the bell of his up-angled trumpet, but he was mourned because his was the last of the minds that had been central to the bebop movement of the middle '40s. When Gillespie went, so did the memory of how it all came about; what he, Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk, Kenny Clarke, Oscar Pettiford and the others did in Harlem clubs, hotel rooms, apartments, and walking down the street as they talked music. Gillespie could see every room, every uniform, recall the smells, the colors, the meals, the ways the instruments gleamed or lay dully under the light, hear the chords as the unusual notes were added, recollect the styles of clothing and the way Negroes and whites wore their hair and talked during those years, how it felt to become the most recognized member of a movement that bloomed right out of his trumpet and Charlie Parker's saxophone, out of the different way pianos, basses and drums formed the inspiring and supporting unit of the rhythm section. With their vibratoless tones, their willfully dissonant harmonies and their race horse tempos, the beboppers remade the small jazz unit and Gillespie led the first big band to make thorough use of what was the freshest material since Duke Ellington had come to power. Over the years Gillespie worked in many formats, exploring his interest in exotic rhythms and making his own variations on the context of trumpet soloist and jazz orchestra that Louis Armstrong had pioneered in the early '30s.

GILLESPIE IS ALSO MOURNED BEcause he embodied the essence of his art. In his walk and his facial expressions, the movements of his hands, the sound of his laugh, the tonal flexibility of his voice, the bored to molten cast of his eyes, the way he danced on his bandstands and the position his body went into when he was on fire and the trumpet had no limitations, Dizzy Gillespie carried and projected the moxie, the curiosity, the wit and the pathos that enliven the world of jazz. Like Louis Armstrong, he was aware of the spiritual muscle necessary to hold still the gymnastic elegance of an iron cross with one hand in the ring of tragedy, the other in the ring of comedy. The travels, the parties, the endless train of nights across the globe when he was made welcome because of the heat he could put through a cold brass instrument, the high casualty list of talent he had seen knocked across the line into death by self-inflicted or social blows, and the humor both light and very dark were taken into Gillespie's electrons. When he arrived, the epic was there.

LIKE A NUMBER OF THE AMERICAN geniuses who affirm the democratic ideal, Gillespie came not from the polished fish bowl of the academy, but, at least partially, from the ocean itself. He was homemade and a scholar of his art, a man who sweated his way to a pinnacle of velocity technique, harmonic sophistication and rhythmic intricacy that hasn't been surpassed. With his cheeks swelling like those of a brown wind demon, he played the trumpet with such power and finesse that he took a position—after Louis Armstrong and Roy Eldridge and before Miles Davis—as one of the four most influential players of his horn in the history of the national music.

EVEN UNDER RUTHLESS SCRUTINY, Gillespie becomes a mythic figure because his accomplishments were so exceedingly large that they would seem to have been accomplished by some Crockett-like combination of fish and fowl, man and beast, sinner and saint, angel and devil, bear and antelope. He was a supreme musical intellectual, whose fire and evangelical willingness to personally deliver musical details made ensemble sense out of what might have been no more than an individual horn style. Many are the stories of his sitting down and showing piano players how to accompany and what chords to play, bass players the nature of the new harmony and drummers the rhythms compatible with what he and Charlie Parker were playing. The Harlem apartment he had on Seventh Avenue during the '40s was a conservatory where the young and curious came to find out what the increasingly formidable trumpet master was putting together. Fifteen or twenty musicians used to be seen walking with him through the streets, listening to his advice and singing the notes he was explaining to them.

IN KEEPING WITH THE NECESSITIES of the night world in which jazz was made and the wit that has carried the Negro through the protean configurations of our society, Gillespie was prepared. He became a professional in an environment where anything could happen. His humor was boundless. His temper was quick, and his response could cut to the bone. The pranks he loved to play and the confidence he had in his dissonant harmonic ideas sparked the antipathy of certain older musicians when Gillespie was making his way during his early 20s. But the young trumpet player who had first been influenced by Roy Eldridge continued to search the piano keyboard for what he needed to get him where he wanted to go. A bottle was thrown against his head because he refused to play something on the piano for a white man during a Southern tour with Earl Hines in the early '40s. Above the Mason-Dixon line, that man might have experienced another side of Gillespie. He was good with his dukes. He carried a knife and once nearly slashed off the arm of a Northern redneck.

BASSIST AL McKIBBON WORKED with the trumpeter's bebop big band in the late '40s and remembers a night they were playing a dance at the Savoy Ballroom in Harlem. McKibbon's wife was at the edge of the bandstand and Gillespie, ever spontaneous, jumped off the bandstand, took her in his arms and went on to win the jitterbug contest. Four or five years ago at a New York club a woman in the audience turned out to be the same partner with whom he had won first prize in Manhattan's largest Latin dance contest two or three decades earlier. "Man, did we *practice!* Oooh. And when we got there, we were *ready.* I'll never forget that night. Oh, it was *so* wonderful."

SUCH AMERICANS ARE BOTH NUmerous and rare. They are numerous because so much of our national tale is the story of their arriving from such surprising places and so indelibly imprinting our culture with both their personalities and the impersonal facts of their accomplishments, proving their work both inimitable and beacons of universal possibility. They are rare because few of even the great American individuals have had as invincible an effect on the way we define ourselves as Gillespie did. He rose from the position of an odd fish to a star surfer riding the high, high curving water of a trend, then sank into the position of those miracles taken for granted, but periodically he always returned to view, dripping with new wisdoms, beckoning as others followed him at the risk of their own prestige and peril.

**STANLEY CROUCH**



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# Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

## The BBC Example

In most fields, statistics are put together in the same way over time. So people know, for example, what unemployment or trade deficit figures mean and are able to rely on them. Not so in education. We spend $250 billion a year on education in the U.S. and it's important that we know what is going on. But people often lack confidence in the figures they get because there has been so much manipulation of statistics to make things look better than they are.

Some school districts with high dropout rates have been known to change the way they counted dropouts so that, even if the actual figures did not change, they could claim a big improvement. Other districts with poor test scores have altered their reporting of these scores to make them look better. That's one reason why Congress created the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)—to give Americans information they could rely on about the performance of our students.

Since the late 1960s, NAEP has been giving examinations in subjects like mathematics, reading and science to samples of U.S. students and reporting the results of each exam in one or two thick volumes. A NAEP report offers much more than raw scores. In writing, for example, it classifies student writing as *minimal*, *adequate* or *elaborated*, and it describes what each of these levels involves. It also gives examples of the kinds of questions youngsters at various levels can answer—like whether a student taking the math exam can figure what he'll owe in principal and simple interest on a loan or a student taking the reading exam can comprehend an editorial from a good newspaper.

The results of the 1992 NAEP math exam were due to be released next summer. Unfortunately, last week outgoing Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander jumped the gun. He rushed some bare-bones results into print, with none of the examples or accompanying information, and announced them at a well-publicized press conference. It's not as though the results had to be released right away. However, there was a little bit of good news. Test scores rose slightly. For example, although the number of 12th graders at the advanced level remained at only 2 percent, 5 percent more of them reached the basic and proficient levels than had in 1990. Probably Secretary Alexander wanted to tell the world, "This happened on my watch."

If we are to believe what we hear about education from our leaders, they need to tell us the bad news as well as the good.

What's wrong with that? Several things. One is that releasing raw scores without the accompanying material runs the risk of turning these NAEP results into the meaningless kind of number juggling we usually associate with standardized test scores.

And while there's nothing wrong with expressing pleasure at even a slight improvement in test scores, why call for a celebration, as Secretary Alexander did, when the overall results are still a disaster? Thirty-six percent of those about to graduate from high school are below what the test calls basic competency—one in every three. Does that mean they can't add, subtract and divide? Perhaps, but we can't be sure because Secretary Alexander's little book doesn't explain. And when you look at the achievement of minorities, 66 percent of African-American 12th graders, 55 percent of Hispanics and 54 percent of Native Americans failed to achieve basic competency. Celebrating results like these is like fiddling while Rome burns because firemen have one or two buildings under control.

There's another problem. In addition to knowing how well our kids perform in relation to our own levels of achievement, we must know how they compare with students in other industrialized countries. We adopted, as one of our education goals, being first in the world in math and science by the year 2000. Everybody knows that will not happen, but there is no way we will achieve this goal by 2005 or 2010—or even know how close we are—unless our standards bear some relationship to the standards in other countries.

Nobody likes to be the bearer of bad news. But if we are to believe what we hear about education from our leaders, they need to tell us the bad news as well as the good. Perhaps they could learn a lesson from the BBC.

During the early days of World War II, the BBC nightly news was full of details about how many miles the Allies had retreated that day, how many Allied soldiers had been killed, etc. Some listeners thought the BBC was crazy for reporting all that bad news, but when the tide eventually turned, people had confidence in BBC reports. If the BBC told the truth when times were bad, it could be trusted now. We need leaders in American education who can establish that kind of trust.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1992 by Albert Shanker.

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To the birds, it matters very little that these boxes of recycled paper reflect a child's creativity and involvement.

But to the environmental education program that distributes these take-home nests, and Phillips Petroleum, who sponsors them, it matters a great deal.

Because as life unfolds inside these cardboard walls, so too does an enduring understanding and respect for the wonder of it all. Helping students realize a greater awareness and responsibility for the environment.

And confirming our belief that when you teach a child about nature, he learns facts about nature.

But bond a child with nature, and he learns to care.

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*For more information about the Bird Box Program and what we are doing to protect our environment, write: Bird Box, Phillips Petroleum Company, 16C4 Phillips Building, Bartlesville, Oklahoma 74004.*

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